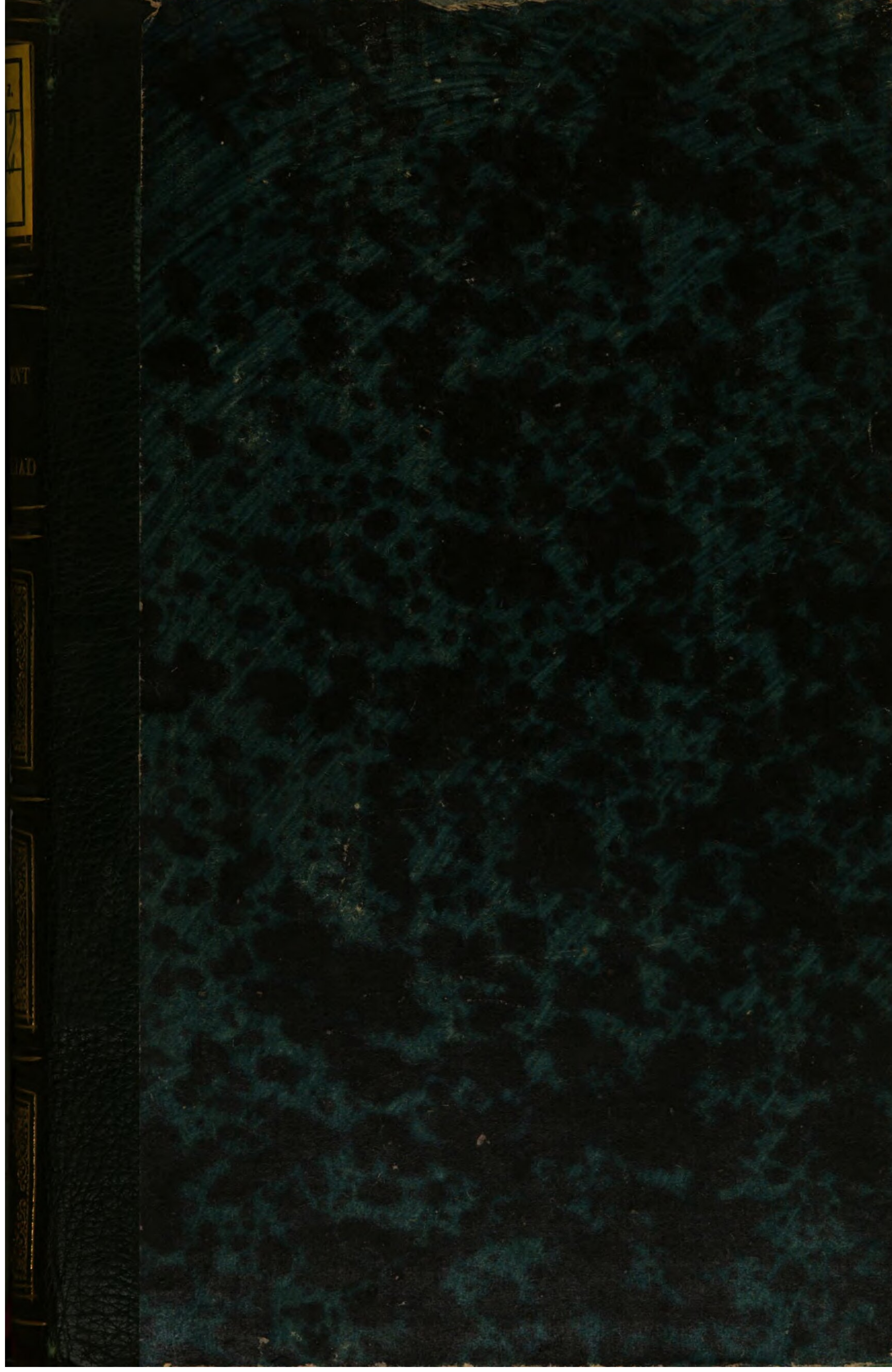
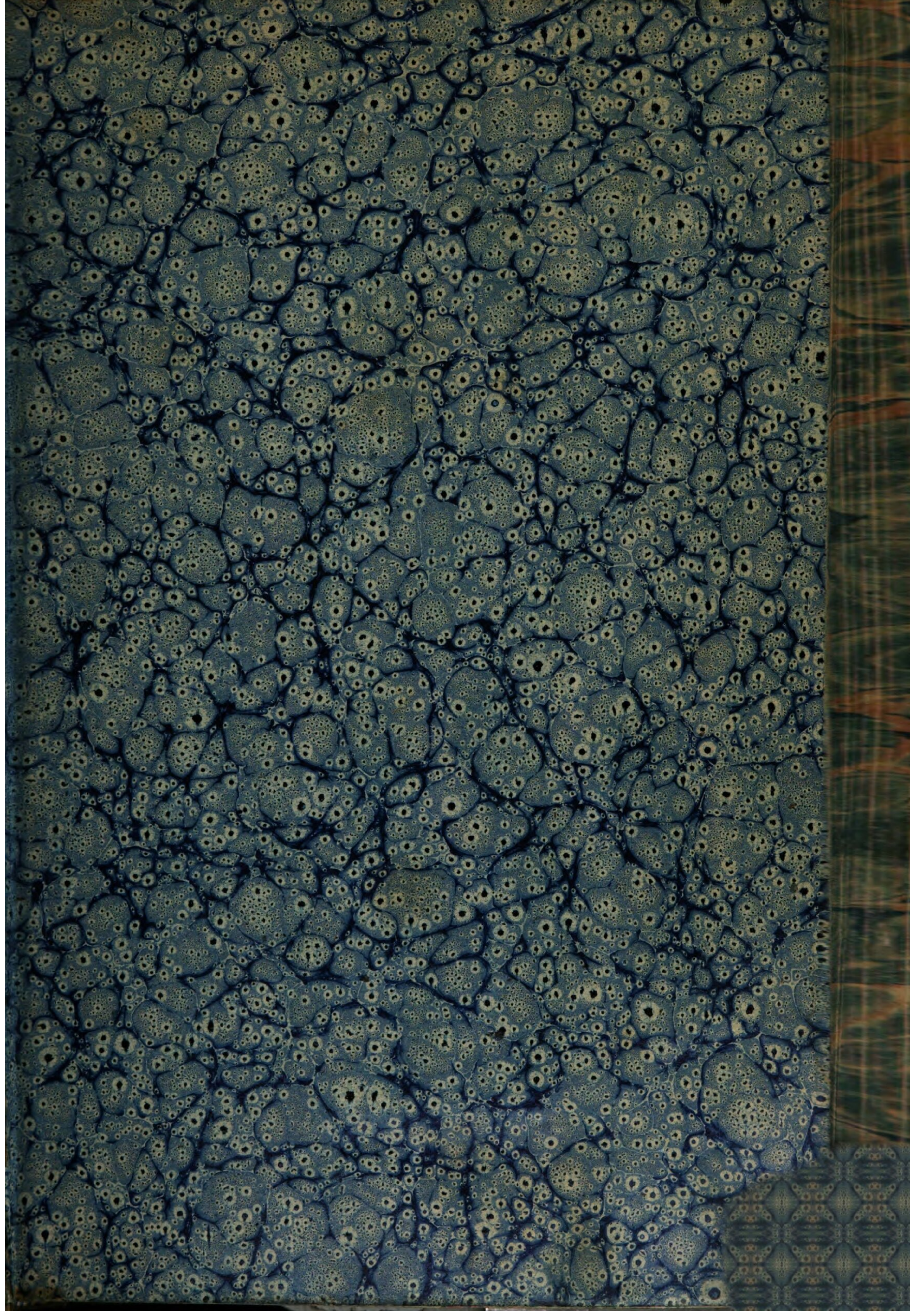




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A. gr. ~~430~~⁴
a. 1222 (Homer.)
Penn

EXAMINATION

PRIMARY ARGUMENT

FIELD

AN
TO
THE
EXAMINATION
OF THE
WILLIAM WYNTHAM GRENVILLE,
BARON GRENVILLE
PRIMARY ARGUMENT
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE
ILIAD.

Ου δει δυσχεραινειν, ει τους πολλους των νυν παιδευοντων
λανθανει τινα των 'Ομηρικων.

PORPHYRII 'Ομηρικ. Ζητημ. Δ.

BY GRANVILLE PENN, Esq.

LONDON:

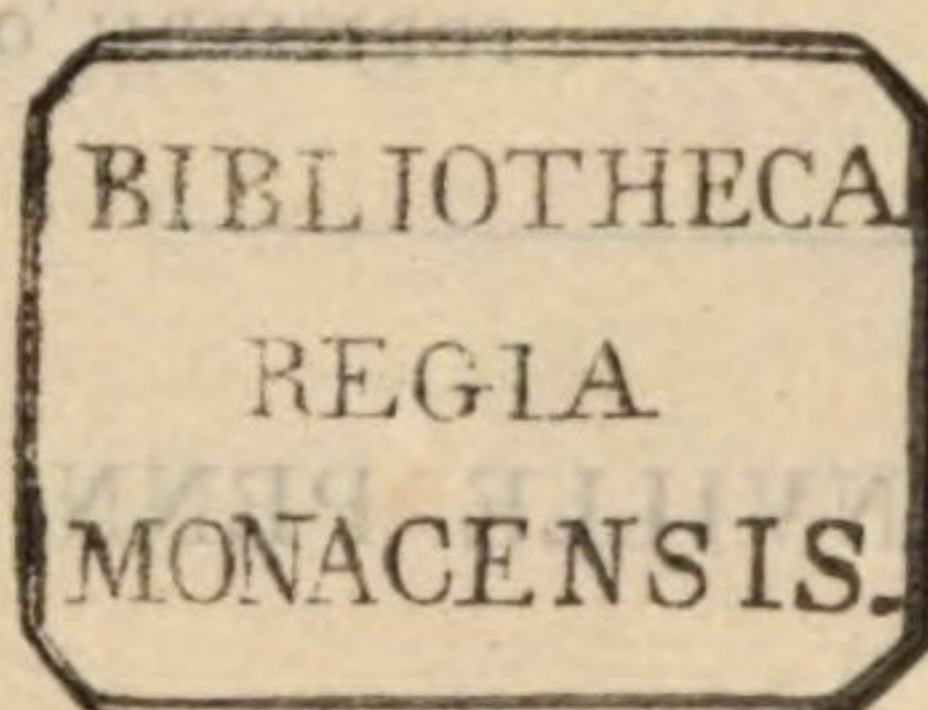
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1821.

AN
EXAMINATION
OF THE
PRIMARY ARGUMENT
OF THE
ILLAD.



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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM WYNDHAM GRENVILLE,
BARON GRENVILLE,
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF
OXFORD,

ΤΩ ΦΙΛΟΜΗΡΩ

THE FOLLOWING EXAMINATION
IS DEDICATED,
WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT,
AND OF THE MOST SINCERE REGARD,
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S
FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM WYNDHAM GRENVILLE
BARON GRENVILLE
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF
OXFORD.

Sc. Sc. Sc.

TO THE PHILOSOPHY

THE FOLLOWING EXAMINATION

IS DEDICATED,

WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT,

AND OF THE MOST SINCERE REGARD,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

PAINTING AND ORIENTAL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I HAVE but little to say, in the way of preface to the following disquisition; that which is introductory of the subject, being incorporated into the first chapter, and that which is apologetical, into the last.

My general object has been, to vindicate the poem, fame, and personality of HOMER, and to demonstrate the judgment of his accurate discerner, ARISTOTLE, against the violations of some distinguished modern critics; who appear to have regarded the names, and works, of those great authors, as a common of inheritance, on which the latest posterity are free to exercise the havoc of their fancy and caprice, *without impeachment of waste.*

I have to solicit the reader, to abstain from anticipating me in the progress of the argument, by breaking in upon its course; and to exercise the patience, of pursuing it in the order in which it is presented to him. To entitle myself to this grace, I have studiously endeavoured to avoid prolixity and digression, although the occasion offered many strong temptations to both; and to compress the matter into as narrow a compass, as could consist with the efficacy of the argument.

Whether, in this age of politics and novels, the English reader may be induced to make experiment of a diet, less heating than the one, and more nutrimental than the other, I know not; but I have adapted the materials with a view to his service, as well as to that of the reader of the original Iliad.

In the English versions, I have quoted from Pope wherever the general sense has

been sufficient ; where a closer rendering of the original has been requisite, I have, in a very few instances, used Dryden, Cowper, or Wakefield in his notes on Pope. Where none of these have given the sense with the minuteness demanded by the argument, I have been under the necessity of supplying the deficiency, by varying, in those places, the translation of Pope.

been sufficient; where a closer rendering of the original has been requisite, I have, in a very few instances, used Dryden, Cowper, or Walsby in his notes on Pope. Where none of these have given the sense with the minuteness demanded by the argument, I have been under the necessity of supplying the deficiency, by varying in those places, the translation of Pope. It is not, however, to be supposed that I have copied the original word for word, but that I have adapted it to the service, as far as possible, to the original language. In some instances, I have quoted from Pope, where the original was not

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AN
EXAMINATION
OF
THE PRIMARY ARGUMENT
OF
THE ILIAD.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE DIVERSITY OF JUDGMENT, OF ARISTOTLE AND THE MODERN
CRITICS, UPON THE EPIC PROPERTIES OF THE ILIAD.

IT is a fact, which well deserves the serious CHAP. I.
consideration of every reflecting scholar; that
whereas the great teacher of the art of poetry,
from whom we profess to have derived the first
principles of that art, has represented the Iliad
of Homer to be a perfect model of *the Epopœa*,
with respect both to unity and integrity of plan,
and exact relation to a beginning, a middle,
and an end, yet, his disciples of the latter ages
have denied these properties to belong to the
Iliad; and although they acknowledge the

CHAP. justness of his judgment with respect to the
I. poem of the *Odyssey*, and readily admit that it possesses all these properties, yet they have ventured to think, that they have discovered their illustrious Master to be entirely mistaken in the character which he has ascribed to the former poem.

It is certainly no extravagant demand on common modesty, to require some deliberate reflection on so remarkable a case; and some patient investigation of the cause, which can have produced so strange an opposition of sentiment between the ancient teacher and his modern scholars, with respect to the one poem, while they entirely agree with respect to the other.

If we listen to Aristotle, the *Iliad* is formed upon an unity of plan so perfect, and demonstrates in its composition and structure, a beginning, a middle, and an end, so admirably marked, measured, proportioned, and articulated together, that there is no discordancy, deficiency, or redundancy, in all its extent. If, on the other hand, we listen to some of the

principal critics and commentators of modern CHAP.
times, the Iliad is notably defective in all these I.
qualities.¹

If we ask, how it came to pass that Aristotle pronounced such a judgment upon it, we are told, generally, that the improvement and refinement of criticism in these latter ages, have generated a new and exquisite sagacity, with which the age of Aristotle was altogether unacquainted; and that it is by means of this more perfect sense, that we are now enabled to discern defects in the poem, which eluded the grosser perception of that ancient Instructor.²

But this answer will not satisfy the judgment of any one, who holds the scale of reason in his mind with a jealous severity of justice; for, after all, it is but an *ex parte* judgment, and no man may be a final judge in his own cause. It is,

¹ Frustra sumi, nihil omnino esse in Iliadis partibus sibi dissimile, nihil nisi quod sibi a summo ad imum respondereat. — HEYNE.

² Nec ingenia illo tempore subacta erant harum rerum judicio. — WOLFE.

CHAP. indeed, a mere begging of the question ; which

I.

if it be not granted, the replicant must needs look out for a better answer. We may admit, to the utmost extent of the truth, the vast improvement which criticism has gained since the revival of learning in Europe, and yet may justly question the truth of the particular fact alleged, that Aristotle deliberately judged contrary to the truth in a matter, in which that refined criticism was in no way necessary ; and where a measure of acuteness very far inferior to his, nay, only a little share of plain common sense, was amply sufficient to decide. For, whether or not a poem is founded upon some *one* principle or argument, which extends through, and connects all its parts ; whether the same argument that *begins* it, does also *end* it ; and whether it presents any sensible *intermediate point*, through which the direction of the argument passes from its beginning to its end ; are things which it requires no peculiar sagacity of discernment to perceive. Now, Aristotle affirms, that all these qualities subsist in the Iliad ; and the modern critics wholly deny it. As, therefore, we refuse

to the moderns to judge finally in their own suit; CHAP.
and deny that they are qualified to decide the ^{I.}
question peremptorily, by virtue of any special
authority which they can possess; we must call
upon them again, to state positively, what
reasons they have for thinking, that they have
judged of the construction of the Iliad with
greater acuteness and greater accuracy than
the eminent master whose judgment they con-
tradict?

To this appeal they make answer; that,
when they apply the *general*, or *primary ar-*
gument to the whole body of the poem, as a rule
or measure by which to gauge it, they find that
the length of the poem *exceeds* the length of the
measure; and, moreover, that it does not truly
answer to the gradations of beginning, middle,
and end, upon the scale, as affirmed by Aristotle.

Must we then say, that Aristotle did not
know how to apply the rule, in the particular
case of the Iliad? or that he could not perceive
the disagreement of the poem with the rule
which he applied? One of these we must of
necessity say, and subscribe implicitly to the

CHAP. judgment of the moderns; unless we will
 I.
 equalize probabilities, by supposing it to be
 equally probable, that *the moderns* may not have
 gauged the poem with sufficient skill and
 acuteness.

Yet, the operation should not be so very
 difficult, but that if both had used *the same*
measure, both must have found *the same results*.
 For, if two men should measure the same extent
 of road by miles and furlongs, the results of their
 mensurations must be the same. But if one
 should mistake furlongs for miles, and roods for
 furlongs, the results must be widely different:
 and what should we say, in that case, if the
 latter should condemn the survey of the other,
 and pronounce it to be erroneous by *a considerable*
excess?

If the rule by which Aristotle and the mo-
 derns have severally measured the *Iliad*, should
 chance not to be one and the same, their results
 must necessarily be very different; but then,
 the latter may be no better authorized to con-
 demn the mensuration of the former, than the
 latter of the two surveyors whom I have sup-

posed, would be authorized to condemn the survey of the former.

CHAP.
I.

Now, the rule for measuring the Iliad, is *the Primary and Governing Argument* of the Poem. It was by this rule, that Aristotle found in it all those perfect qualities which he has alleged; and the moderns declare, that it is by this same rule that they find it altogether defective of those qualities. But, did they both use *the same rule*? Yes! reply the moderns; for we likewise use *the primary argument*. This is indeed the same, nominally; but has it ever yet been clearly proved, that what the latter have assumed for the primary argument, is the same that was accounted such by Aristotle? I apprehend that it has not; and from hence will arise these very material questions: *Did Aristotle and the moderns assume the same thing for the primary argument of the Iliad, or very different things?* If the latter, *Which of the two assumed the true argument?* And lastly, *What was that true argument?*

These questions, we shall now endeavour to resolve.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE JUDGMENT OF ARISTOTLE, RESPECTING THE EPIC
PROPERTIES OF THE ILIAD.

CHAP. II.  It is admitted, that we possess the Iliad in the same state, as to its general structure, in which it was possessed by Aristotle; with the differences only of such depravations as occur to all ancient writings, in the succession of many ages, and of innumerable transcriptions: which depravations usually become more numerous, in proportion to the interest which is taken in the work. We know, that our own Sacred Scriptures, parts of which are of considerably higher antiquity than the poems of Homer, have not escaped similar depravations; yet we know at the same time, that although many thousand variations and corruptions of the text have been ascertained, they in no way disturb or vitiate the general purport of those sacred volumes.

In the same manner, we are to consider

that we now hold the Iliad as it was held by Aristotle; that is to say, as having sustained the errors and violations of careless scribes and meddling critics, but yet remaining substantially the same, as to the general matter of the narrative and order of the recital. CHAP.
II.

It is upon this Iliad that Aristotle's remarks were made, and it was to this Iliad that his principles were applied; and we have therefore to consider, what his principles were, and to observe the results which he affirms to have followed the application of those principles to the poem.

In the first place: He affirms, that *the main subject*, or fable, which he contemplated in it, that is, *the primary*, or *general argument*, is *simple*, or *single*; whereas that which he contemplated in the Odyssey, is *complicated*.¹ From hence it will follow, that no variety of incidents combine to constitute the primary

² Εἰσι δὲ τῶν μυθῶν οἱ μὲν ἁπλοὶ, οἱ δὲ πεπλεγμένοι. — *Poet.* c. 10. — ἡ μὲν Ἰλιάς, ἁπλοὺν καὶ παθητικὸν (ποίημα), ἡ δὲ Οδυσσεΐα, πεπλεγμένον. — c. 24. Edit. Winstanley.

CHAP. argument of the Iliad; but that all its incidents
 II. are subordinate to *the simplicity* of its argument,
 which comprehends and combines them all.

In the next place: He affirms, that this simple argument is engaged with *one action*,¹ which is, in itself, a *one, entire, and perfect whole*; exhibiting all the proper and essential qualities of unity and entireness, viz. *a beginning*, ἀρχή—a *middle*, μέσον—and *an end*, τέλος, each correlative to the other, and all articulated intimately together.

What he means by *a whole*, and by *a beginning*, *a middle*, and *an end*, he most distinctly explains. “A *whole*,” he says, “is that which
 “has beginning, middle, and end. A *begin-*
 “*ning*, is that which does not necessarily fol-
 “low from any thing that precedes it, but
 “which has something that must necessarily
 “follow it: an *end*, on the contrary, is that
 “which follows something that preceded it,
 “either necessarily or ordinarily, but which
 “has nothing to follow it: a *middle*, is that

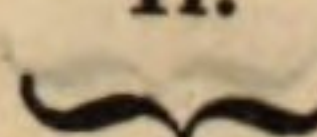
¹ περὶ μίαν πράξιν, οἴαν λεγομένην τὴν Ὀδυσσεύαν—ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰλιάδα.—c. 8.

“ which has something that necessarily both
 “ precedes and follows it.”¹

CHAP.
 II.

Let us now consider, how far it is probable, or even possible, that Aristotle should have fallen into any error in making these affirmations of the Iliad ; when it is admitted, that he has fallen into no such error in his representations of the Odyssey. Nothing can be more perspicuous than his own view of these points ; because nothing can be more perspicuous than the view of them which he communicates to his reader. Wherefore should he have affirmed that the subject or argument is *simple* or *single*, but because his mind perceived a character of *simplicity*, or *singleness*, subsisting in it ? Wherefore should he affirm it to be a perfect *unity*, demonstrating all the essential properties of unity, but because his mind contemplated such a

¹ Ὅλον δὲ ἐστὶ, τὸ ἔχον ἀρχὴν, καὶ μέσον, καὶ τελευτὴν· ἀρχὴ δὲ ἐστίν, ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν μὴ ἐξ ἀναγκῆς μετ’ ἄλλο ἐστὶ· μετ’ ἐκεῖνο δ’ ἕτερον πεφυκέν εἶναι ἢ γίνεσθαι· τελευτὴ δὲ τὸ ἀντικείμενον, ὃ αὐτὸ μετ’ ἄλλο πεφυκέν εἶναι, ἢ ἐξ ἀναγκῆς, ἢ ὥς ἐπιτοπολὺ· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο ἄλλο οὐδέν· μέσον δὲ, ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ μετ’ ἄλλο, καὶ μετ’ ἐκεῖνο ἕτερον. — C. 7.

CHAP. character in the poem? For these are not ob-
II. jects that require any depth of research to be discerned, or that lie involved in any intricacy or obscurity; if they exist at all, they must lie upon the surface, and be exposed to the eye of every beholder. Will any one, therefore, who knows any thing at all about Aristotle, venture to maintain a doubt, whether his mind was competent to distinguish between unity and plurality?

But this is not all: When Aristotle ascribed those qualities to the Iliad, he did not apply a pre-existing rule, in the application of which he might err through an imperfect apprehension of it; as when we, at the present day, apply that rule. The rule was one of his own forming and propounding; it was the fruit of his own acute and deep reflection, drawn from a close survey of all the poets whose works existed in his own time, and from a comparison of each with the others. From these he deduced the requisites for perfection in an epic poem; which requisites have ever since been admitted as constituting the canon of the Epopœa; and all

these he declared to exist in the most perfect CHAP.
degree, equally in the poems of the Iliad and ^{II.}
of the Odyssey.

That this was the process by which he obtained his rules, is apparent on comparing and combining his several remarks, in which he affirms the existence of all those properties in the two great poems of Homer, and the necessity of them for constituting a perfect epic poem. He lays down generally, from the principles of nature, the essential properties of *unity* and *entireness*; and affirms specially, that “as Homer surpassed all former poets in all other things, so he did peculiarly in his correct discernment of those properties, either by rule of art, or by the instruction of nature.”¹ He again lays down generally, that a perfect epic poem ought to be engaged with *one, entire action*, having beginning, middle, and end;²

¹ Ὁ δ' Ὀμηρος, ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα διαφέρει, καὶ τοῦτ' εἰσὶ καλῶς ἰδεῖν, ἩΤΟΙ ΔΙΑ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ, Ἡ ΔΙΑ ΦΥΣΙΝ. — c. 8.

² περὶ μίαν πράξιν ὅλην καὶ τέλειαν, ἔχουσαν ἀρχὴν, καὶ μέσον, καὶ τέλος. — c. 23.

CHAP. and he then affirms specially, that “ the Iliad
 II. “ and Odyssey are eminently representations
 “ of *one action*.” And he concludes, with ob-
 serving again: “ Though the Iliad and Odyssey
 “ comprehend many subordinate parts, each of
 “ which possesses its own separate magni-
 “ tude, yet the construction of *both* those
 “ poems is as perfect, and as nearly approach-
 “ ing to the imitation of a single action, as is
 “ possible in the Epopœa.”¹

He thus shows, that his rules of art for poetry, were deduced from the contemplation of Homer’s practice in poetry; in which the principles of those rules were so manifest to his steady and discerning view, that he could not decide, whether they existed in Homer as rules of art, or principles of nature. When, therefore, he says, *ἥτοι διὰ τεχνὴν, ἢ διὰ φύσιν*—*either by art, or by nature*, he testifies an uncertainty whether he was propounding original rules, or whether

¹ ΤΑΥΤΑ ΤΑ ΠΟΙΗΜΑΤΑ ΣΥΝΕΣΤΗΚΕΝ ὥς ΕΝΔΕΧΕΤΑΙ ΑΡΙΣΤΑ, καὶ ὅτι ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ ΜΙΑΣ ΠΡΑΞΕΩΣ ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ.—C. 26.

he was only transcribing those by which Homer had governed his own Epopœa. CHAP.
II.

A judicious writer has thus remarked of the logic of Aristotle: “Herein was the genius of
“Aristotle admirably great: he read himself,
“and therein mankind, in their true and proper
“colours; for one man stript to his reason
“and the due use of his faculties, is but the
“counterpart of another. His *logic* was the
“pure result of his own observations upon the
“working of his thoughts and the proceeds of
“his reason; for logic does not teach us to
“argue, nature did that before it; but it reduces
“our reasonings into rules and methods, and
“shows us *how* we do it.” In the same manner
we may affirm of his *poetics*, in what relates to
the Epopœa; that they are “the pure result
“of his observations on the working of Homer’s
“thoughts, and the proceeds of his genius.”
He has not proposed an ideal theory in the
rules and principles which he has laid down for
poetry, a theory drawn *a priori* from the com-
binations of his own mind; but he has deduced
a system of rules by meditating upon the prin-

CHAP. ciples of nature which had given origin to the
 II. best practices.

It is a monstrous inconsistency to receive his poetics for our code in poetry, and himself for our master, and yet pronounce him ignorant in his own science. It is something like Lucian's *Alexander in the Shades*. “Did not the “wise Aristotle teach you these things?” inquires Diogenes. “*He, wise!*” exclaims Alexander, “*who is the most impudent of all cozeners!*” Or perhaps such critics mean to say, as the same personage proceeds: *εμε μόνον εασον τα Αριστοτελους ειδεναι* — “*allow me alone to know any thing about Aristotle.*” To suppose that Aristotle, who first drew from nature the clear principles of logic and poetry; to whom alone we are indebted for them, and the truth of which we admit; could not apply his own simple rule for the *Epopœa*, in the particular case of the *Iliad*, or perceive whether the object to which he applied it, accorded with it or not, is a supposition which confutes itself by its own absurdity. Did we ever hear of the first discoverer of a great principle acknowledged

and received by the judgment of mankind, who was incapable of applying *his own* principle? or who, though his principle was received with applause as a guide to truth, was himself convicted of error in his application of it? To those who would thus endeavour to represent him in order to gain a triumph to their own visionary systems, we may, with peculiar fitness, apply the words which Wolfe has applied to certain critics on the proëm of the Iliad: “They would make him such an infant, as not even to understand the art, which, with infinite ingenuity, he was the first to reduce to principles.”¹

The judgment of Horace, which is entirely conformable to that of Aristotle, and which was delivered three hundred years after him, ought in all reason to have checked such overweening confidence, and to have operated by suggesting and enforcing the propriety of some hesitation:

¹Facerent enim illum adeo infantem, ut quam artem primus ingeniosissime quæsisset, eam ne agnoscere quidem.

—*Proleg.* p. 119.

CHAP.

II.



— ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,

Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.

While to such points his fiction tends,

So aptly truth with falsehood blends,

That all the parts, to ONE design,

Beginning, middle, end, combine.

Yet, Horace is thrown without ceremony into the same predicament with Aristotle; both are judged participators in the same stupid oversight; and all this is done without even the equitable, nay, the decorous form of attempting first to discover how so strange a phenomenon could have occurred, as that Aristotle, after all the evidences of pre-eminent sagacity and acuteness which his voluminous works display, was incapable of discerning whether a poem which he pronounced to agree with a rule of his own preparing, *did*, or *did not*, agree with that rule.

A very little diffidence, and a very little logic, one would have thought, would have suggested, that when Aristotle positively asserted the agreement of the poem with the

rule, there must have been *some reason* on his part for making the assertion; and that, if that reason was not immediately apparent, there must be also *some cause* for the non-appearance of that reason. A mind ingenuously impressed with such a suggestion, would in the first instance have inferred, and without any reluctance, its own actual ignorance; and would then have applied itself to investigate that cause, before it would have hastened to infer ignorance in Aristotle. That this great instructor could not distinguish whether the Iliad was longer, or shorter, or exactly equal in length to the scale by which he measured it, is therefore a supposition which I shall dismiss, without wasting upon it any further consideration; and I shall conclude definitively, from the foregoing discussion, *That Aristotle certainly recognised in the Iliad a primary and governing argument, agreeing strictly with his rules, and yielding all the results which he has declared.*

CHAP.

II.

CHAP.

III.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE JUDGMENTS OF THE MODERN CRITICS RESPECTING THE
EPIC PROPERTIES, AND THE PRIMARY ARGUMENT, OF THE
ILIAD.

CHAP.
III.

LET us proceed now to inquire what the modern critics have exhibited as the result of their attempts to measure the Iliad by the scale of Aristotle.

The modern critics upon this poem, may be divided, generally, into two classes: those who strenuously assert the accuracy of Aristotle's results, yet fail in every effort to prove them; and those who deny the accuracy of his results, because they have discovered no method of proving them. The latter of these, although they betray very great precipitancy, yet certainly exhibit more consistency than the former. The former, chiefly belong to the French school; the latter, to the schools of England and Germany.

We shall now review these several authorities. To collect them all in this place, would

be as inconvenient as it would be unnecessary; it will be sufficient to produce the principal of them, which we will do, beginning with the latter of those two classes, the English and Germans, because their opinions are the most prevalent at the present day. Those which I purpose to adduce, are Pope, Lord Kaimes, Blair, Pye, Wolfe, and Heyne; these will supply ample ground for the argument which I undertake.

CHAP.
III.


It is agreed by all these critics, that *the primary argument* constitutes *the rule* by which the poem of the Iliad must be tried, and by which it was tried by Aristotle; but, in stating what they conceive that primary argument to be, they immediately betray great uncertainty, and are divided among themselves; some assuming *the anger of Achilles*, and some his prayer incorporated in *the prayer of Thetis*. These are the *only subjects* which their judgments have been able to take hold of, as constituting the primary argument. The consequence of either of those assumptions, was, however, obvious and inevitable. Those who

CHAP. assumed *the anger of Achilles*, found that argu-
 III.  ment fail them at the opening of the eighteenth
 book, leaving *an excess* of the poem, of nearly
seven books. Those who assumed *the prayer of*
Thetis, found that argument fail them after the
 twenty-second book; leaving thus an excess
 of *two* books. All immediately hastened to
 draw this precipitate and illogical conclusion;
 “that the poem, *therefore*, exceeds the measure
 “of *its true and proper primary argument*, in
 “those different proportions;” and they pro-
 ceeded to deduce this further corollary, “that
 “Aristotle had, *therefore*, not sufficient sagacity
 “to discern that excess.”—“*O, acutos homines!*
 “(exclaimed Cicero of the Stoics,) *quam paucis*
 “*verbis negotium confectum putant! Ea sumunt*
 “*ad concludendum, quorum iis nihil conceditur.*”
 “O, acute reasoners! with what few words
 “they think they have settled the whole
 “business! They draw a final conclusion from
 “premises, of which no particle is granted
 “them.”¹

¹ Cicero, de Divin. lib. ii. c. 49.

But, has Aristotle any where signified, that he regarded, either *the anger of Achilles*, or *the prayer of Thetis*, as the primary argument of the Iliad? or as that by which *he* measured the poem? He has no where said, or implied any such thing. As, therefore, neither of those subjects form an argument possessing the properties which he ascribed to the main argument and action of the Iliad; the only inference that reason ought to have drawn, or which it can legitimately draw from those premises, is simply this, “*that Aristotle did not regard either of those subjects as constituting its primary argument.*”

The first editors of Homer have not treated of the general argument of the Iliad, but have only given under the heads of ὑποθέσεις, or *argumenta*, the subjects of each separate book. Barnes contented himself with prefixing to his elaborate edition, whatever he could collect from the Greek writers, relating to Homer and his poems, but has entered into no inquiry respecting the primary argument. Clarke has not inquired into the main argument, though

CHAP. he has briefly recorded, in his first note, a de-
III.  cided opinion of its perfect unity and entireness. Pope, is the first English critic of whom I have to speak. He affirms, in his preface, that “the “*main story* of the Iliad is *the anger of Achilles*; “the *most short* and single subject,” he adds, “that was ever chosen by any poet.” And, in his note at the end of his translation, he repeats the same affirmation: “*The anger of Achilles*, “and the terrible effects of it, *is alone the “subject of the poem.*” From hence it is evident, that although his mind was so long and so intimately engaged with its contents, he yet could discern no other argument that might contest, with that “most short one,” the dignity of being the main subject. He enters into no direct examination of that subject by the rules of Aristotle, though he glances obliquely at those rules. He shows, however, that he was sensible, his “short main subject” would not bear that test, for he proceeds to anticipate, in order that he may prevent, the objections which he saw might be drawn from them, by extolling the superiority of *nature*

above *art*, and by asserting the prerogatives of the former. CHAP. III.

However just this distribution may be, it is nevertheless entirely irrelevant to the occasion, for the *art* of Aristotle, is but the transcript of the *nature* of Homer; and what the former requires by rule, he found in Homer, who supplied him with the rule. Had Pope apprehended the true governing argument which Aristotle contemplated in the poem, he would have been sensible of that correspondence; but, failing of that apprehension, and erroneously assuming *the anger of Achilles* for that argument, he could not but discern a very considerable disparity in length, between the argument and the poem, which seduced him to draw the false conclusion, that the structure of the Iliad, and the energies of Homer's mind, bore no relation of proportion to Aristotle's graduated measure. Hence, to prevent that disparity from being converted into a ground of censure upon Homer, he launches out into tropes and figures to vindicate the freedom of nature; instead of keeping

CHAP. close to solid reasoning, to defend the regulated
III. excellencies of the Iliad. “Nature,” says he,
“possesses the riches, by the managing of
“which, like a prudent steward, art is enabled
“to live.” Or, “Nature is a domain of vast
“and various extent, in which art has only an
“uniform and bounded walk.” Or, again,
“Homer’s poem is a *wild* paradise, where, if
“we cannot see all the beauties as distinctly
“as in an ordered garden, (i. e. laid out by
“the rules of the poetics,) it is only because
“the number of them is infinitely greater.
“It is like a copious nursery, which contains
“the seeds and first productions of every kind,
“out of which, those who followed him have
“but selected some particular plant, each
“according to fancy, to cultivate and beautify.
“If some things are *too luxuriant*, it is owing
“to the richness of the soil.”
But all this declamation, however elegant
and poetical, tends to establish nothing with
respect to the main argument, but is rather
evasive, or apologetical of it: it neither
proves that he has apprehended the true

argument, nor that the argument, if rightly CHAP. III.
 apprehended, would be at variance with the
 rules of the poetics. It proves, however, how
 much he felt the inadequacy of *the anger of Achilles*, for supplying what those rules required; and that so “*short*” a subject, if, indeed, it be “*alone the main subject*,” must necessarily leave *a great excess* in the measure of the poem, if tried by those rules, or, to use his own terms, that it must be found much “*too luxuriant*.” But, as we shall presently see, the anger of Achilles, declared in the first line of the poem, does not constitute the main subject, though it is a very material part of that subject; and we may venture to pronounce, that Achilles’s anger, alone, unsubjected to a more exalted argument, would never have given rise to the Iliad, nor have called forth those energies which have filled mankind with delight and admiration for so many ages.

Lord Kaimès, in his *Essay on Criticism*, adverting to Aristotle’s poetics, c. 6 and 7, which require a beginning, a middle, and an

CHAP. end, to constitute an entire action, thus pro-
III. ceeds: “ In the *Æneid*, the hero, after many
“ obstructions, makes his plan effectual. The
“ *Iliad* is founded upon a different model;
“ it *begins* with the quarrel between Agamem-
“ non and Achilles, *goes on* to describe the
“ several effects produced by their cause, and
“ *ends* in a reconciliation. Here is *unity of*
“ *action*, no doubt, a beginning, a middle, and
“ an end, but inferior to that of the *Æneid*,
“ which will thus appear. The mind has a
“ propensity *to go forward* in the chain of
“ history, it keeps always in view, *the expected*
“ *event*; and when the incidents, or under-
“ parts, are connected by their relation to
“ that event, the mind runs swiftly and easily
“ along with them. This pleasure we have
“ in the *Æneid*. It is not altogether so
“ pleasant, *as in the Iliad*, to connect effects
“ by their common cause, for such connexion
“ forces the mind to *a continual retrospect*;
“ looking back, is like walking backwards.
“ Homer’s plan is *still more defective* upon
“ another account, that the events described

“ are but imperfectly connected with *the wrath* CHAP.
 “ of Achilles, their cause; his wrath did not III.
 “ exert itself in action, and the misfortunes
 “ of his countrymen were but negatively the
 “ effects of his wrath, by depriving them of
 “ his assistance.”

All the strictures contained in this extraordinary and most unhappy sample of criticism, arise out of a gratuitous, and erroneous assumption, that the anger of Achilles is the primary argument of the Iliad. Yet when Kaimes lays down the just principle, that the mind has a propensity to go forward, and keeps always in view the expected event, and, at the same time, objects to the Iliad, as being founded on an opposite principle; it might have occurred to his memory, that it was precisely this principle, which he could not discern in the Iliad, that Horace has noted as one of its most distinguishing characteristics:

Semper ad eventum festinat.—

Still, to the grand event *he speeds his course.*

And if he had recollected this, it could hardly

CHAP. have failed to induce some reflections on the
 III. judgment of such an authority, opposed to
 his own, which must have led him to inquire into the cause of their opposition. This might have prompted him to question his own judgment concerning the primary argument, which drew him to a conclusion directly contradictory of Horace. But he did not do this; and the consequence is, that the whole passage which I have produced, is a tissue of false criticism throughout. He does not apprehend the true notion, either of *a middle* or *an end*, according to the intention of Aristotle, although he dogmatises concerning them.

His notion of *a middle*, is most extraordinary and unphilosophical; it is, he says, the “going on” of the poem, from its beginning to its end; which is the same as if any one, in expounding the proper meaning of μέσον ημερ, *mid-day* or *noon*, should define it to be the *going on* of the sun from its rising to its setting, that is, the whole of the day, excepting only sun-rise and sun-set. Such was certainly not Aristotle’s notion of a middle, nor, indeed,

that of any one else. Aristotle has very distinctly stated, in his *Ethics*, what he means by the *μεσον*, or *middle* of a thing. CHAP. III.
 “In strict
 “arithmetical proportion, it is that which is
 “*equidistant* from each extremity, and is one
 “and the same in all things.” It is also,
 “*πως ακρον*, a sort of *apex*, or angular point.”
 But, when he speaks of the middle, according to a *moral rule*, he requires to be understood with less minute precision, as intending a point which is somewhere intermediate between the extremes, although it may not lie exactly and arithmetically equidistant from each.¹ It, therefore, cannot be the *going on*, or continuity of progress from beginning to the end, but must always be a *definite point*, distant from both. In the same manner, he considers the *μεσον* of an epic poem, which must be measured by a moral, and not by an arith-

¹ Λέγω δε του μεν πραγματος μεσον, το ισον απεχον αφ' εκατερου των ακρων, οπερ εστιν εν και ταυτο πασι.—τουτο δε μεσον εστι κατα την αριθμητικην αναλογιαν· το δε προς ημας ουχ ούτω ληπτεον—κ. τ. λ.—ARISTOT. *Ethic.* lib. ii. c. 6.

CHAP. metical rule, to be some definite and fixed
 III. point, or stage, in the extent of the poem,
 not an indefinite and wandering progress within
 that extent.

As he fails in apprehending the notion of a *middle*, according to Aristotle, so he fails likewise in assigning the true *end* of the poem, the nature of which is, “that it has nothing “to follow it.” And yet, according to his view of the argument, viz. “*the wrath of Achilles “to Agamemnon*,” he can assign no other end than *the end of that wrath*. As this occurs in the opening of the eighteenth book, there the poem ought to end according to his view; consequently, the seven books which follow that end, must be an excess and redundancy, transgressing, in an exorbitant degree, all the prescriptions of the poetics, and contradicting all its positions: a consequence, however, which fully demonstrates, that those positions were not founded upon that argument.

Blair’s criticisms, as they regard the primary argument of the Iliad, are not more successful, and are exposed to similar objections. “The

“ opening of the Iliad,” he observes, “ pos- CHAP.
 “ sesses none of that sort of dignity which III.
 “ *a modern* looks for in a great epic poem.
 “ It turns on *no higher subject* than the quarrel
 “ of two chiefs about a female slave. The
 “ priest of Apollo beseeches Agamemnon to
 “ restore his daughter, who, in the plunder
 “ of a city, had fallen to Agamemnon’s share
 “ of booty. He refuses. Apollo, at the prayer
 “ of his priest, sends a plague into the Grecian
 “ camp. The augur, when consulted, de-
 “ clares, that there is no way of appeasing
 “ Apollo, but by restoring the daughter of
 “ his priest. Agamemnon is enraged at the
 “ augur, professes that he likes his slave better
 “ than his wife Clytemnestra, but since he
 “ must restore her in order to save the army,
 “ insists to have another in her place, and
 “ pitches upon Briseis, the slave of Achilles.
 “ Achilles, as was to be expected, kindles into
 “ rage at this demand, reproaches him for his
 “ rapacity and insolence, and after giving him
 “ many hard names, solemnly swears, that
 “ if he is to be thus treated by the general,

CHAP. III. “ he will withdraw his troops, and assist the
 “ Grecians no more against the Trojans. He
 “ withdraws accordingly. His mother, the
 “ goddess Thetis, *interests Jupiter in his cause,*
 “ who, *to revenge the wrongs which Achilles*
 “ *had suffered,* takes part against the Greeks,
 “ and suffers them to fall into great and long
 “ distress, until Achilles is pacified, and re-
 “ conciliation brought about between him and
 “ Agamemnon. *Such is the basis of the whole*
 “ *action of the Iliad.* Hence rise all those
 “ ‘*speciosa miracula,*’ which fill that extraor-
 “ dinary poem; and which have had the
 “ power of interesting almost all the nations
 “ of Europe, during every age, since the age
 “ of Homer.”¹

This excellent man, like Lord Kaimes, assumes *the anger of Achilles* for the primary argument, for he finds its termination in the pacification of Achilles, and his reconciliation with Agamemnon, at the beginning of the eighteenth book. There must, therefore, be

¹ Lectures on Rhetoric, &c. Sect. 43.

a preposterous *excess* of the poem, according to Aristotle's rules, which Aristotle himself was not sufficiently acute to discern. But we see the superiority of *the modern* called in aid, to favour this exposition; a superiority, which, though undeniable in many respects, is certainly not discernible in this criticism. The whole of the argument that Blair exhibits, as "*the basis of the whole action of the Iliad*," is little more than a sketch, not a very elegant one, of the details of the first book, or beginning of the poem. The *end* he finds in the reconciliation related in the beginning of the nineteenth book; but of *the middle* he takes no account whatever. When he affirms, that the poem turns *on no higher subject* than the anger of Achilles, and the interest in his cause with which Thetis inspired Jupiter, he only shows how far he was from apprehending the true argument, as will hereafter be made to appear.

Pye, in his Commentary and Notes on *the Poetics*, treads in the same track. "The *Iliad*," he observes, "may be said to fall

CHAP.
III.
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CHAP. " under the error above mentioned, of *being*  
 III. "*spun out after the catastrophe is completed.*"<sup>1</sup>

This is indeed a direct, and a very curious contradiction of the great writer whose work he took the pains to expound. " Although," says Pye, " I cannot agree with the Stagirite " in thinking, that the Iliad is as much an " imitation of *one action* as the nature of the " epopee will admit, yet I by no means wish it " to be other than it is, or would sacrifice the " seven last books of it to the observation of " any critical rule whatever." According to rule, however, Pye regards " the reconciliation " of Achilles and Agamemnon, as the solution " of the plot of the Iliad, as the death of " Turnus is of the *Æneid*;"<sup>2</sup> and all that follows that reconciliation, as an irregular " spinning out of the poem after the catas- " trophe is completed." Thus, then, Pye also assumes the anger of Achilles as the primary argument, and his reconciliation with Agamemnon, as the proper catastrophe, or

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<sup>1</sup> P. 175, Not. 1. to c. 7.      <sup>2</sup> P. 543, Not. 4. to c. 26.



end; and he infers from thence, that the poem exceeds, by the enormous quantity of seven books, the Stagirite's own rule for the end, which he must have supposed, that the Stagirite was not able to perceive. The learned laureate is, at the same time, very lenient and forbearing, for he would not sacrifice those seven books to keep the Iliad within that rule. Homer, however, will presently show, that he needs not that clemency at the hand of the laureate, but that he will stand or fall by the rule of the Stagirite.

It is surprising, that men of tutored minds should be so ready to regard *rule*, as something opposed to *nature*; for, where do we see rule so admirably marked and observed, as in the operations of what we denominate *nature*? We see this to be the case in the material world, and we are conscious of it in the intellectual. The fact is, that we are too apt to consider nothing as *nature* in poetry, but the unregulated sallies of the imagination. Whereas, to render every mental operation perfect in its kind, the presiding power of *reason* must

CHAP.

III.



CHAP. exercise a perpetual government over the  
 III. motions of the mind, and regulate them by  
 principles of truth and propriety, which, in  
 effect, are *rules*. This it did in Homer;  
 and those principles, detected and declared,  
 constitute the rules of Aristotle. These rules,  
 and Homer's practice, will never be found to  
 be at variance, if they are duly investigated;  
 and, therefore, the contradiction which Pye  
 thought he discovered between the place  
 where Homer has ended the *Iliad*, and the  
 place where Aristotle's rules would require  
 that it should have ended, is only a proof of  
 his own failure of apprehending the primary  
 argument that Aristotle contemplated in the  
 poem; not any, of a discordancy between the  
 genuine argument of the poem, and Aristotle's  
 critical rules.

The same critic quotes the following pas-  
 sage from Hume's *Essay on the Association of*  
*Ideas*, Sect. 3, but which I do not find ac-  
 cording to the reference: "Though it is  
 "evident, that, in the course of the narrative,  
 "Homer exceeds the first proposition of his



“ subject, and that *the anger of Achilles*, which CHAP.  
 “ caused the death of Hector, is not the same III.  
 “ with that which produced so many ills to  
 “ the Greeks; yet, the *strong connexion* be-  
 “ tween these *two* movements, the quick trans-  
 “ lation from one to another, the contrast  
 “ between the effects of concord and discord  
 “ among the princes, and the natural curiosity  
 “ to see Achilles in action after such long  
 “ repose, all these causes carry on the reader,  
 “ and produce *a sufficient unity* in the subject.”

It would appear from this passage, that Hume adopted the notion which he found generally to prevail; which resulted from the assumption, that the anger of Achilles was the only argument which governed the Iliad, and that it constituted the only rule which prescribed the measure of the poem; and from thence he inferred *excess*. The error of the supposition, that the *unity* of the Iliad consists in the *connexion* between *two* distinct movements, will be shown, when we come to consider Heyne, and the leading critics of the French school. That its unity is true, simple, and



CHAP. absolute, will be made to appear, when we  
<sup>III.</sup>  
arrive at the deduction of the primary argument, from a review of the entire poem.

From the English, let us now turn to the German school, which will demand of us a more particular, and a more jealous consideration. Of this school, I have selected Wolfe, and Heyne, as being pre-eminent above all others, by the learned labour, and minute research which they have bestowed upon the poems of Homer.

Wolfe, although he regards the Odyssey as a perfect poem, yet holds in undisguised contempt those who do not perceive the Iliad to be faulty, by *a great excess*, if it be tried by the test by which Aristotle would establish its perfection of entireness, and its exact correspondence and co-extension with its primary argument. And his reason is, that it exceeds the measure of Achilles's anger towards Agamemnon. "The Odyssey," he says, "is to  
" be accounted the most splendid monument  
" of Grecian genius, both on account of its  
" main subject and its composition. For, with



“ respect to THE ILIAD, *learned men are still* CHAP.  
 “ *in contention, concerning its main subject and* III.  
 “ *primary argument.*<sup>1</sup> Of which argument  
 “ whatever opinions may be formed, or, how-  
 “ ever widely the sense of *the proëm* may be  
 “ extended, it *will never be shown* by solid  
 “ reasons — *nunquam certis argumentis doce-*  
 “ *bitur* — that the first seven lines promise  
 “ any thing beyond eighteen books. The re-  
 “ mainder do not contain the anger of Achilles  
 “ towards Agamemnon and the Greeks; but a  
 “ new anger, very different from, and far less  
 “ calamitous to them, than the former, and  
 “ which is only an appendix to the anger  
 “ marked out in those seven lines. But if  
 “ we were to reduce all the actions of the  
 “ Greeks before Troy, and all the several  
 “ books of the Iliad, under one argument,  
 “ the whole of the Iliad would be found to  
 “ relate to the *glory* of Achilles, rather than

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<sup>1</sup> *Odysea, cujus admirabilis summa et compages pro  
 præclarissimo monumento Græci ingenii habenda est. Nam  
 in Iliade nondum deposita sunt certamina virorum doctorum  
 de rerum Capite et Argumento Primario. Prolegomena ad  
 Homerum, p. 118.*



CHAP. “ of any other Greek or Trojan hero, and only  
 III. “ a small part to his *retentive anger*. So that  
 “ we may reasonably wonder that some manu-  
 “ script has not been discovered, in which,  
 “ in place of the proëm or exordium which  
 “ we now read in those seven lines, the fol-  
 “ lowing, or a better, has not been found:

ΚΥΔΟΣ αειδε, θεα, Πηληϊάδεω Αχιλλος

ὅςθ' εἰως βασιλῆϊ κοτεσσάμενος ἐνὶ νηυσὶ

κειτο, Αχαιοῖσιν τε καὶ αὐτῷ αλγέ' ἔδωκεν,

αὐτὰρ ἀνίσταμενος Τρῶσιν καὶ Ἑκτορι δῖω—

“ *Sing, O goddess, THE GLORY of Achilles, son of*  
 “ *Peleus, who, while he remained in his ships,*  
 “ *incensed against the king, caused innumerable*  
 “ *afflictions to the Greeks and to him; but, when*  
 “ *he arose against the Trojans, and godlike*  
 “ *Hector, &c.* It would be somewhat absurd to  
 “ say, that such accuracy would be too subtle  
 “ for Homer's age; nor would they venture to  
 “ say so, who believe the proëm of the Odyssey  
 “ to have proceeded from Homer.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prolegom. ad Homer. p. 118.



And in his Preface he says: “The Odys- CHAP.  
sey is, indeed, far more admirable in the III.  
“excellencies of its structure, and more perfect  
“in all points of art. In the first place, the  
“*entireness* of that poem is such as scarcely  
“any other epic poem possesses. Let us now  
“suppose the Iliad to end with the death of  
“Patroclus, and to have its termination at line  
“620 of the seventeenth book; no one I be-  
“lieve would object, that less is there per-  
“formed than is promised in the epitome of  
“the subject in Book xv. l. 56—77, in which  
“Jupiter declares his future plans. For in that  
“epitome he speaks also of the destruction of  
“Troy, and yet we neither find, nor desire any  
“description of that destruction. And even  
“Christians would have felt some pain, and  
“the Greeks not only great pain, but likewise  
“great indignation, if so glorious a hero had  
“failed to avenge the death of his friend. If  
“then he had ended his poem here, who would  
“have ventured to censure Homer; or would  
“have complained that he had not thoroughly  
“accomplished all that he promised? Who



CHAP. “ would think *that the Iliad had not as good a*  
 III. “ *termination as the Æneid?* It will, perhaps,  
 “ be said, that *the counsel of Jupiter declared to*  
 “ *Thetis renders the appendix of the seven*  
 “ *following books fit and proper; but I am not*  
 “ *inquiring concerning the counsel of Jupiter,*  
 “ *but of Homer.* Granting, however, that  
 “ they are fit and proper, I yet ask, whe-  
 “ ther they accord with the argument proposed  
 “ by the poet? Of this I entertain a doubt;  
 “ for I will not be pertinacious. But, whoever  
 “ he was that *subjoined those latter books*, he was  
 “ without doubt a very ancient poet.”

Wolfe’s judgment of the comparative merits of the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, and his view of the primary argument of the latter poem, are decidedly pronounced in the foregoing passages. The perfection which he ascribes so unreservedly to the *Odyssey*, he altogether denies to the *Iliad*. He thinks that the whole of the arguments proposed in the exordium of the latter poem, relates to the anger of Achilles—  
 “ *omnia ad iram Achillis relata*”—according to which, the poem ought properly to have termi-



nated with the close of the seventeenth book; CHAP.  
but that it cannot be drawn out, with any defen- III.  
sible plea, beyond the death of Hector, in the  
twenty-second book. Consequently, *the poem*  
*runs out beyond the measure of its argument; which*  
*it exceeds by the quantity of two books, at the least.*

In deducing that consequence, Wolfe agreed with his predecessors. They, however, only employed it to infer, that Homer wrote with a latitude that would not submit to the limitations of Aristotle; and that Aristotle was mistaken, in asserting that Homer's poems conformed to those limitations. But this learned and eager critic was not satisfied with such spare and homely inferences; his active fancy received, from that assumed consequence, an excitement which urged him on from corollary to corollary, until he passed away into regions far above them all. For thus, in effect, he argued: If the poem, as we now possess it, exceeds the length of its argument, it will not follow that it did not originally end with that argument. It is probable that it did; and then, all that exceeds will have been



CHAP. subjoined by a different hand. But if such  
 III. liberties have been taken with the conclusion of  
 the poem, equal liberties may have been taken  
 with all its parts. It will then demand an  
*altior critice*—a more exalted species of criticism,  
 to ascertain what is genuine, and what is not.<sup>1</sup>  
 And this may lead us to a discovery, that only  
 a large proportion of the poem can be reason-  
 ably ascribed to the original poet. And,  
 since we know that the *Iliad* possessed its  
 present form as early as the time of Pisistratus,  
 who preceded Aristotle by about 200 years,  
 and since Aristotle's reasonings, therefore, have  
 been employed upon the poem in this its adul-  
 terated state, why are we to be fettered by his  
 rules, in forming our judgment of the poem?  
 The *altior critice* must decide, and Aristotle  
 must submit to its decision.

Ascending thus by the climax of invention,  
 all bounds and restraints of authority were soon  
 surpassed; and learned ingenuity found itself

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<sup>1</sup> Quantæ partis Homericorum Homerus videatur auctor  
 esse. Pref.



at length floating in the free and unconfined CHAP.  
 space of fancy and hypothesis, where it could III.  
 wander and expatiate at will, in all the com-  
 placency of self-authority and self-admiration.

Jamque novum delectat iter; positoque timore

Icarus audaci fortius arte volat.

But, the Dædalean wings which sustain this soaring flight, are the two original assumptions; 1st, That the poem of the Iliad *certainly exceeds* the length of its true primary argument; and, 2dly, That it *never can be shown*, that the length of the poem, and of its argument, are *co-extensive*. Should those two assumptions chance to be dissolved, should it be shown, by sound and solid reasons, that the length of the two are really co-extensive and commensurate, and, therefore, that the poem does not exceed its argument in length, the soaring German, like his celebrated archetype, must fall from his airy height.

The learned Heyne agrees entirely with Wolfe, with respect to the general question; to whose “*acute reasonings*” he refers his



CHAP. readers.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, he differs from  
 III.  him on some particular points. “The argu-  
 “ment,” he observes, “may be deduced by  
 “two different ways: from the entire poem;  
 “or, from the exposition contained in the  
 “first lines, which promise *the anger of*  
 “*Achilles, and its pernicious effects on the Greeks*  
 “*through the counsel of Jupiter:* to which is  
 “added a further exposition, that Apollo sent  
 “a pestilence, on account of the injury exer-  
 “cised upon his priest; that when Agamemnon  
 “was required to make satisfaction by restor-  
 “ing his daughter, he at first refused; nor did  
 “he restore her, until he received in her place  
 “Briseis, whom he forcibly took away from  
 “Achilles. Thus, the proper *exposition*, or  
 “*proëm*, is confined to the first seven lines.  
 “It was indeed to be expected, in the natural  
 “order of the narrative, that when the poet  
 “had related *the anger of Achilles*, and its  
 “disastrous consequences, he should relate  
 “also the means by which *that anger* was

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<sup>1</sup> Homer. Heyne. tom. viii. p. 781, 800, 812.



“ afterwards appeased. As soon, however, as  
 “ this was accomplished by *the death of Hector*,  
 “ the argument of the promised poem was  
 “ then completed: *so that the two last books are*  
 “ *the work of another author—alienæque sunt*  
 “ *rhapsodiæ duæ ultimæ.* Nor has this, as  
 “ well as some other things which I shall  
 “ expose, escaped the observation of some  
 “ learned men; among whom, I especially  
 “ name Wolfe, who has treated of them in his  
 “ *Prolegomena*, p. 118.” The passage to which  
 Heyne here refers his reader, is the first of the  
 two passages which I have cited from Wolfe.

Heyne falls here into an oversight, which is  
 surprising in a critic of his just eminence. He  
 forgets, that the death of Hector can have no  
 relation to the anger of Achilles towards Aga-  
 memnon, proclaimed in the proëm; and, there-  
 fore, that it could not be the means by which  
 that anger was appeased. The death of  
 Hector, appeased indeed the anger of Achilles  
 towards Hector; but that was a subsequent  
 and a very different anger—*a priore longe diver-*  
*sam*, says Wolfe; which arose only in the



CHAP. <sup>III.</sup>  eighteenth book. Whereas, the anger of which the proëm speaks was appeased by a reconciliation with Agamemnon, in the nineteenth book; leaving an excess of the narrative, of nearly six books. The learned German lapses into a confusion similar to that which we shall have occasion to notice, when we come to consider the critics of the French school.

He proceeds thus: “ The other method  
“ of deducing the argument, is from the  
“ poem itself. After the plague had been  
“ sent, and the means of expiation for the  
“ contumely offered to the priest had been  
“ declared; and when anger and contention  
“ had arisen between Achilles and Agamem-  
“ non; the argument takes its ground in the  
“ secession of Achilles; it goes on with the  
“ battles and slaughter of the Greeks; until  
“ Achilles again enters the field. The means  
“ by which this last event is brought to pass,  
“ is that which constitutes what we may call  
“ the *very marrow* of the animated body; I  
“ call it *the knot* of the poem — est illud, quod



“ *ipsam medullam*, ut ita dicam, corporis ani-  
 “ mati constituit: nos *nodum carminis* appel-  
 “ lamus:—a contrivance very simple in itself,  
 “ namely, *the death of Patroclus, beloved above*  
 “ *all men by Achilles*; but managed with won-  
 “ derful sagacity, since events are so con-  
 “ ducted by Jupiter, that in consequence of  
 “ the slaughter of the Greeks, Achilles *gives*  
 “ *orders* to Patroclus to go forth into the  
 “ conflict. For *Jupiter had been influenced*  
 “ *by the entreaties of Thetis, to govern the*  
 “ *issue of things by that means*. As soon as  
 “ Patroclus is slain, Achilles himself goes forth  
 “ into the field to avenge the death of his  
 “ friend; and, after a great carnage of the  
 “ Trojans, he slaughters Hector. He then  
 “ prepares the funeral and funeral games of  
 “ Patroclus, reserving the body of Hector for  
 “ final contumely; but Priam, *taking measures*  
 “ for redeeming the body, at length recovers  
 “ it; and having brought it back to Troy,  
 “ inters it with sepulchral honours.

“ Thus the narrative proceeds with suffi-  
 “ cient consistency, and is sufficiently well



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“ arranged, and drawn out by the order of  
 “ occurrences to its proper and natural end;  
 “ so that nothing more remains that could be  
 “ desired. Nevertheless, we cannot pronounce  
 “ that *the anger of Achilles* constitutes the  
 “ argument of the poem; since it does not  
 “ consist wholly in the effects of that anger, or  
 “ in its pacification. Unless you choose to  
 “ say, that the funeral and funeral games of  
 “ Patroclus, and the redemption of Hector,  
 “ pertain to *the pacification of that anger*.  
 “ The common opinion, that *the anger of*  
 “ *Achilles* constitutes the argument, is derived  
 “ from a too literal interpretation of the words  
 “ of the proëm; for if they be properly inter-  
 “ preted, and reduced to the common standard  
 “ of speech, they will express poetically —  
 “ αειδε τα μυρια αλγη, κακα, αἱ μνηις Αχιλλεως  
 “ Αχαιοις εθηκε: i. e. *Sing, the numberless afflic-*  
 “ *tions and misfortunes which the anger of Achilles*  
 “ *brought upon the Greeks.*—The extensive title  
 “ of, *the Iliad*, which has been given to the  
 “ poem, excites a suspicion, that the author  
 “ was unconscious of the maxim that con-



“stitutes the proper nature of the Epopœa; CHAP.  
 “and which requires, that it should embrace III.  
 “*only one action.* There is no doubt, that  
 “*Αχιλλεία*, or *the Achilleid*, would have been a  
 “more suitable title for it: its *primary argu-*  
 “*ment* might then have been stated, *Αχιλλεύς*  
 “*ατιμία και τιμή* — *the dishonour and honour of*  
 “*Achilles*; for *every thing* tends to this end,  
 “that Achilles *may receive satisfaction for the*  
 “*injury done to him*, not in the matter of  
 “Briseis, but in the insult offered to his  
 “honour. — If it be now asked, which method  
 “of deducing the argument I prefer? I do  
 “not hesitate to say, that I think that drawn  
 “from the body of the poem the most pro-  
 “bable of the two; and that the argument  
 “prefixed to the poem, and in part drawn  
 “from it, does not sufficiently correspond with  
 “the sum of the narrative. Unless you will  
 “say, that this proceeds from subtilty of art;  
 “which I can hardly believe pertained to so  
 “ancient a poet.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ib. p. 781—783.



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## III.

In his note on the proëm he thus remarks :  
 “ The poet refers the whole argument, in the  
 “ first instance, to *Achilles enraged—ad Achillem*  
 “ *iratum*; and, after his secession, to *the*  
 “ *slaughter of the Greeks by the Trojans*. Now,  
 “ if we compare this argument with the poem  
 “ itself, the latter will be found much more  
 “ copious than the promise contained in the  
 “ former; for, to the slaughter of the Greeks  
 “ resulting from the quarrel between Achilles  
 “ and Agamemnon, is subjoined (what might  
 “ well have been expected) a vengeance for  
 “ the slaughter sustained, to which Achilles is  
 “ roused by the death of Patroclus. Thus the  
 “ *Iliad* might be drawn out *to the death of*  
 “ *Hector, at the utmost*. But, all that is  
 “ added over and above, concerning the funeral  
 “ games of Patroclus, and the redemption of  
 “ the body of Hector, sufficiently proves; *that*  
 “ *the mind of him who composed the poem, or of*  
 “ *him who enlarged its bulk, was not imbued with*  
 “ *so subtile a notion of the epopœa as some persons*  
 “ *would maintain.*”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tom. i. p. 5. not.



From the foregoing passages, two things are  
apparent; 1st. That whether Heyne deduces  
the argument from the proëm, or from the nar-  
rative, he finds the length of the poem exceed  
the measure of the argument: 2d. That he  
attributes all that portion which exceeds, to  
a different hand. In these points he agrees  
entirely with Wolfe; and, like Wolfe, he makes  
them the ground-work of a system of criticism,  
which would terminate its operation by de-  
spoiling Aristotle of his intellect, and Homer of  
his poem, his fame, and his personal existence.  
Of the effects which that system aims at pro-  
ducing, we shall take some general notice at  
the close of this treatise; what most concerns  
us, is to expose the visionary quality of the  
assumptions which compose its basis. Heyne  
indeed proposes his system with estimable  
moderation and candour; nor can any terms be  
better calculated to conciliate personal respect  
and regard to a writer, than those with which  
he introduces it. Nevertheless, it is impos-  
sible to carry that respect so far, as to yield  
ourselves to the friendly and engaging form of

CHAP.  
III.



CHAP. invitation, which he borrows from the venerable

III.

Pylian orator for his conclusion:

αλλα πιθεσθε και υμμες, επει πειθεσθαι AMEINON.<sup>1</sup>

Come, be convinced! to be convinced is best.

Because, two very contrary qualities reveal themselves throughout his criticisms upon this poem; precipitate decision in particulars, and general indecision and scepticism; both of which may be traced to their cause, the loss of the true primary argument: the possession of which would have prevented the latter, and have restrained the former. I have already had occasion to point out those imperfections, in the mutable, yet positive, opinions which this distinguished scholar pronounces on the proper subject of Virgil's fourth eclogue.<sup>2</sup>

From all that has been shown in this chapter, it plainly appears, that these several eminent critics have recognised no other subject in the Iliad which they could adduce, or apply, as its *primary argument*; than either the

<sup>1</sup>T. viii. p. 776. <sup>2</sup>Observ. on Virgil's Fourth Ecl. p. 34—40.



*anger of Achilles, or the prayer of Thetis:* both of which, being shorter in extent than the narrative in length, necessarily leave *an excess of the poem*, if either of them be applied as the rule by which to measure it; and they, therefore, contradict the positive assertion of Aristotle, of the co-extension of the true argument with the poem. The mensurations of these critics, therefore, and that of Aristotle, yield opposite results. From whence I do not instantly infer, with them, that *they are right*, and Aristotle *wrong*; but I cautiously draw this only legitimate conclusion, *that they and Aristotle did not assume the same thing for the primary argument of the Iliad, but very different things*; and I take my measures for endeavouring to discover, what that other thing was, which was assumed by Aristotle.

It is very observable in all these critics, how much they feel it requisite to depreciate the judgment of Aristotle, either expressly or by repeated implication,<sup>1</sup> in order to support

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<sup>1</sup> De Aristotele quid audeam video; sed in eadem pœne



CHAP. their own assumptions with respect to this  
 III. poem; thereby plainly showing, that the obscuration of his judgment is absolutely necessary for bringing light and relief upon their own; and, by the soreness they experience from the state of contradiction in which they stand towards that great master, that they do not feel a secure confidence in the ground which they have taken for themselves, unless they can drive his authority entirely out of the field.

The French school, on the other hand, or those critics who propounded what Wolfe calls, “*vulgaria Gallo-Francorum præcepta et formulæ epici carminis faciendi*,” differ entirely from the preceding, by standing forward as the champions of Aristotle, and valiantly asserting the perfect agreement of the Iliad with all his rules and results. Yet they have produced no other *argument*, by which to make their assertion good, than one or other of those which led the former to an opposite, and a more consistent

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*hæresi sum, &c.*—*Contraria, etsi hoc non capitale duco, Aristoteleis, &c.* Prol.—*Aristotele barbatische magistris, &c.* Pref. Wolfe.



conclusion. Their zeal for Aristotle's honour is great and laudable, but they are inadequate maintainers of that honour. With them, strong words supply the place of strong reasons; we shall, therefore, not detain ourselves long with this school. The following passage, from Madame Dacier's last note to her translation of the Iliad, will sufficiently reveal the tactics of these champions.

“The poem,” says this learned lady, “has  
 “all its proper parts; it has, as Aristotle  
 “teaches us in his *poetics*, a *beginning*, a *middle*,  
 “and an *end*.” Yet, when she would prove  
 her position by marking out those parts, she  
 fails in every point. “The *beginning*,” she  
 says, “is Achilles, who, *incensed against Aga-*  
 “*memnon*, passes from a state of *tranquillity*, to  
 “a state of *anger*; the *middle*, is the effects of  
 “that anger, and all the evils which it pro-  
 “duces; and the *end*, is the return of Achilles  
 “into a state of tranquillity, by *the death of*  
 “*Hector*, who had slain Patroclus. This *end*  
 “is most correct, because the state of tran-  
 “quillity to which Achilles then returns, is

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 ~~~~~


CHAP. III. “the effect of the vengeance which had pre-
 ceded; and, after that vengeance, we look
 for nothing further from his anger. Homer,
 therefore, has *perfectly accomplished* his sub-
 ject; and it is impossible to imagine *an action*
 more closely followed, more complete, and
 the parts of which are more naturally and
 necessarily bound together.”

If the gallantry of French readers disposes them to bow to this judgment, the frankness of English readers will not permit them to exercise a similar complaisance; for there is nothing correct in this exposition but the statement of the *beginning*, of which there could be no dispute. In assigning the *middle*, Madame Dacier falls into the same error as Lord Kaimes, by considering it to be the “*going on*” of the poem, comprehending “the effects of Achilles’s anger, and all the evils which it produced;” the inconsistency of which notion, I have already exposed.¹ It is curious to remark, how ingeniously she com-

¹ P. 30.

pounded an unity of action for the poem, in CHAP.
order that she might place *the end* of the action III.
where she was sensible the precepts of Arist-
totle required it. She makes the commence-
ment of the anger of Achilles *towards Aga-*
memnon, the beginning of the argument, and
its cessation *towards Hector*, its end. But,
how can the beginning of *one* thing, find its
end in the end of *another*? How can the end
of Achilles's anger towards Hector, constitute
the end of his anger towards Agamemnon?
Heyne, we have seen, has fallen into the same
mistake, though Wolfe was entirely aware of it.
Each separate anger must have had its own
separate beginning and end; they are, indeed,
two incidents totally different and distinct; and
with no natural relation between them, that
should render the one necessarily successive
to the other, or prevent them from running
parallel with each other. The anger towards
Agamemnon, is alone mentioned at the be-
ginning, and if that constitutes the primary
argument, there can be no question, that it is
exhausted and terminated at the point of the

CHAP. III.  reconciliation; and the poem, in that case, preposterously *exceeds* its argument, consistently with the conclusion of the English and German critics. Madame Dacier owed that ingenious device to Bossu, who thought, “that *the transfer* of Achilles’s anger, from Agamemnon to Hector, is so regularly effected, and *the two* so intimately articulated, that *unity* is thereby established;” but Pye justly protested against such a *complicate unity*.

Madame Dacier, however, required that her readers should receive it without observation; and she has anticipated an objection, respecting the ending of the poem, in order to declaim it into silence: “Some one will say, “after Achilles was appeased, and after he “had delivered up the body of Hector, the “action of the Iliad was finished; why did he “so particularly notice the observance of the “truce? it was no part of his subject. To “this objection, the Reverend Father Le Bossu has *admirably* answered — a *admirablement répondu* — in the 17th Chapter of his “Second Book; where he has shown the

“ difference between the development — *le* CHAP.
 “ *dénouement*, and the consummation — *l’acheve-* III.
 “ *ment*, of an action. The latter, is properly
 “ *the end of the other*; and there are *some*
 “ *actions* which necessarily demand this end,
 “ among which, is the action that forms the
 “ subject of *the Iliad*.”

The object of all these subtilities is obvious; it was to plant a conviction, by a tone of authoritative erudition, that the point had been proved; that the anger of Achilles was an argument co-extensive with the whole Iliad, and one that would triumphantly stand the test of Aristotle’s rules for the Epopœa. And thus the French school, though so zealous for the honour of Aristotle and of Homer, could discover no primary argument by which to prove the skill and correctness of either; except the identical one, by which the English and Germans thought to prove the incorrectness of the former, and the Germans, the imperfection, if not the non-existence of the latter. M. De Rochefort, the late French translator

CHAP. of the Iliad, has not discussed the question of
 III. the primary argument.

Gilbert Wakefield has subjoined to the translation of Bossu's *Treatise of the Epic Poem*, prefixed to his edition of Pope's Version of the Iliad, a note which may well find a place here. "If the reader shall receive any help
 "from this long dissertation, either with re-
 "spect to the general construction of the
 "Iliad and Odyssey, or the beauty and pro-
 "priety of detached parts, he is much more
 "fortunate than the editor; who prefers a
 "single particle of taste, to all this mass of
 "ingenious and baseless speculation, which
 "gratuitously determines, that every thing
 "done by Homer is unexceptionably just; that
 "his plan is incapable of amendment; and his
 "execution, rectitude itself. True taste, and
 "such theories, differ in the editor's estima-
 "tion, as the shields of Diomedes and Glaucus:

χρυσέα χαλχειών, ἑκατομβοί' ἐννεαβοίων.¹

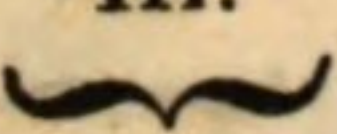
"Golden for brass, and costly changed for mean."

¹ Il. vi. 236.

But, neither the anger of Achilles, nor the purport of his prayer to Jupiter through the intercession of Thetis, can possibly constitute *the primary argument* of the Iliad. CHAP.
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First; because, if there is any other agency in the poem superior to the anger of Achilles; which acts with an uniform tendency throughout; which governs and controls the anger of Achilles, and compels it to shift and alter its direction, while, at the same time, its own purpose is invariably pursued and maintained, from the beginning to the end of the narrative; then, *that agency*, and not the anger of Achilles, must be the chief agency, and determine the primary argument; and the anger of Achilles will only be *an instrument*, subordinate to that supreme agency.

Again; if the events brought to pass by Jupiter, subsequently to the prayer of Achilles, or of Thetis, are *most adverse* to the intentions and wishes with which that prayer was preferred, then, a compliance with those wishes and intentions was not the main purpose in bringing about those events; and the matter

CHAP. of the prayer will not contain the rule of the
III.  action of the poem. But both these will be found to be the case, although contrary to the views taken by the latter expositors.

We have now found reasons for coming to these two conclusions:—First, That Aristotle certainly recognised in the Iliad a primary and governing argument, agreeing strictly with his rules, and yielding all the results which he has declared. Secondly, That Aristotle, and the moderns, did not assume the same thing for the primary argument. It, therefore, now remains for us to inquire, *which of the two assumed the true argument; and, what that true argument was?*

Since Aristotle has not stated the primary argument by which he formed his judgment of the Iliad; but has left his readers to collect it from the poem, because he thought it must be obvious to the attentive reader of the entire narrative; we have no means of discovering it, except by *a new survey of the whole poem.* If, in taking such a survey, we shall happen to discover *an argument* answering, in every

particular, to the standard of *the poetics*; yielding the same results; co-extensive with the actual extent of the poem; and overruling all the objections opposed by the moderns to the judgment of Aristotle; I shall then think myself justly authorized to conclude, that *we have at length succeeded in recovering the argument which was contemplated by Aristotle, and, at the same time, the true and proper argument originally intended by Homer.*

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CHAPTER IV.

A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE NARRATIVE OF THE ILIAD, IN ORDER
TO THE DEDUCTION OF ITS PRIMARY ARGUMENT.

CHAP. IV. **THAT** the Primary Argument of the Iliad is a point hitherto undetermined; and, consequently, that it is still open for investigation, even in this late period of time; is acknowledged in the words of Wolfe, which I have quoted in the last chapter.¹ It is likewise implied in those words of Heyne: “ I cannot think that any one has
“ ever closed the Iliad, after reading it through,
“ without *many doubts arising in his mind, with*
“ *respect to its main subject and argument.*”²

There are, as Heyne observed, two ways in which we may proceed to seek that argu-

¹ P. 41.

² Non facile puto aliquem a perlecta Iliade discessisse, quin de carminis summa et fortuna multa animo volveret. Tom. viii. p. 774.

ment; either in *the narrative*, or in *the proëm*. CHAP.
 Of these two, the former will be found the ^{IV.} 
 more surely effectual, because, by a steady
 and unbroken survey of the whole narrative,
 from beginning to end, we must perceive what
 the poet *has accomplished*; whereas, the uncer-
 tainty which at present disturbs the lines
 forming the proëm, renders it impossible to
 pronounce, with any security, what he *intended*
to promise; and there can be no doubt, that we
 are more likely to find the primary argument
 in that which he has certainly declared, than
 in that in which his declarations are dubious.
 It must be remembered, that we, at this re-
 mote distance from Homer, stand in a very
 different position from those for whom the
 Iliad was at first composed. With them, no
 doubt existed respecting the primary argu-
 ment; the whole subject was matter of pre-
 vious notoriety and common tradition, and they
 listened to it, as to the beautiful celebration of
 a known and favourite topic, prepared for all
 they heard, and awake to all its various

CHAP. allusions ; all which things the poet expected
 IV.  to find in his auditors. Whereas, at the present day, when the primary argument has, from some cause or other, become lost ; if we would endeavour to recover it, we must necessarily investigate the whole poem anew, from the beginning to the end ; and we cannot hope to repossess ourselves of it, otherwise than by a retrospective process, after the investigation has been diligently made and perfectly completed.

Let us, therefore, deduce from the Iliad, thus retrospectively surveyed, and compared in all its parts, a scheme of the general story of the Trojan war, as it stood in the mind and contemplation of Homer when he composed this great poem ; we shall then be able, by the same process, to perceive, and to understand distinctly, the particular circumstance which Homer has so excellently selected for its primary argument ; and we shall, at the same time, be sensible of the truth and force of Aristotle's remark : *καὶ ταύτη Θεσπεσίος ἀν φανείη Ὅμηρος* —

‘EN MEPOS (του πολέμου) ΑΠΟΛΑΒΩΝ¹ — *that* CHAP.
Homer seems to have been, as it were, guided by IV.
a DIVINE INFLUENCE, in selecting ONE PAR-
TICULAR CIRCUMSTANCE out of that war.

According to that scheme, the divine counsels had decreed the destruction of the city and kingdom of Troy, and of the whole race of Priam; and the confederated armies of Greece, were the appointed instruments by which that destruction was to be effected. Of that fated destruction, of which both Troy and Greece were equally apprized, Hector thus speaks with melancholy and tender forebodings to Andromache:—

ΕΥ ΜΕΝ ΓΑΡ ΤΟΔΕ ΟΙΔΑ ΚΑΤΑ ΦΡΕΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΑ ΘΥΜΟΝ,
 ΕΣΣΕΤΑΙ ΗΜΑΡ ΟΤ’ ΑΝ ΠΟΤ’ ΟΛΩΛΗ ΙΛΙΟΣ ΙΡΗ,
 ΚΑΙ ΠΡΙΑΜΟΣ, ΚΑΙ ΛΑΟΣ ΕΥΜΜΕΛΙΩ ΠΡΙΑΜΟΙΟ.
 ΑΛΛ’ ΟΥ ΜΟΙ ΤΡΩΩΝ ΤΟΣΣΟΝ ΜΕΛΕΙ ΑΛΓΟΣ ΟΠΙΣΣΩ,
 ΟΥΤ’ ΑΥΤΗΣ ΈΚΑΒΗΣ, ΟΥΤΕ ΠΡΙΑΜΟΙΟ ΑΝΑΚΤΟΣ,
 ΟΥΤΕ ΚΑΣΙΓΝΗΤΩΝ, ΟΙ ΚΕΝ ΠΟΛΕΕΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΕΣΘΛΟΙ

¹ Poet. c. 23.

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ΕΝ ΚΟΝΙΗΣΙ ΠΕΣΟΙΕΝ ὙΠ' ΑΝΔΡΑΣΙ ΔΥΣΜΕΝΕΕΣΣΙΝ,
 ὅσσοι σεί', ὅτε κεν τις Αχαιῶν χαλκοχιτῶνων
 δακρυοεσσάν αἰγῆται, ἐλευθερὸν ἡμᾶρ ἀπούρας·
 καὶ κεν, ἐν Ἀργεὶ εὔστα, πρὸς ἀλλῆς ἴστον ὕφαινοις,
 καὶ κεν ὕδωρ φερεοῖς Μεσσηϊδὸς ἢ Ὑπερείης,
 πολλ' ἀεκαζομένη· κρατερὴ δ' ἐπικείσεται ἀνάγκη·
 καὶ ποτὲ τις εἰπήσιν, ἰδὼν κατὰ δακρυ χέουσάν·
 Ἕκτορος ἠδὲ γυνῆ, ὅς ἀριστευέσκε μαχεσθαι
 Τρῶων ἵπποδαμῶν, ὅτι Ἴλιον ἀμφεμαχόντο.
 ὥς ποτὲ τις ἐρεεῖ· σοὶ δ' αὖ νεὸν ἐσσεται ἀλγος
 χητεῖ τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς, ἀμυνεῖν δουλίον ἡμᾶρ.
 ἀλλὰ ΜΕ τεθνεῖατα χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλυπτοί,
 πρὶν γέ τι σῆς τε βόης, σοῦ θ' ἐλκηθμοῖο πυθεσθαι.¹

*For well my mind forebodes, with sure presage,
 That Troy shall perish by the Grecian rage!
 The fatal day draws on, when I must fall,
 And universal ruin cover all!
 Not Troy itself, though built by hands divine,
 Nor Priam, nor his people, nor his line,
 My mother, nor my brothers of renown,
 Whose valour yet defends th' unhappy town;*

¹ Il. vi. 447—465.

Not these, nor all their fates which I foresee,
Are half of that concern I have for thee!

I see, I see thee, in that fatal hour
Subjected to some Greek's relentless power;

Led hence, a slave to some insulting sword,

Weeping, and trembling at a foreign lord;

A spectacle in Argos; and thy doom,

To grace with Trojan art a stranger's loom:

Or from deep wells the living stream to take,

And on thy weary shoulders bring it back.

There, whilst thou groan beneath this load of life,

They cry, 'Behold the mighty Hector's wife!'

This when they say, thy sorrows will increase,

With anxious thoughts of former happiness;

That he is dead, who could thy wrongs redress!

May I lie cold before that dreadful day,

Pressed with a mound of monumental clay!

Thy HECTOR, wrapt in everlasting sleep,

Shall neither hear thee sigh, nor see thee weep!

But the same divine counsels which had decreed the destruction of Troy, had further decreed, as *a PRELIMINARY to that catastrophe*, that *Hector should die before the final calamities of his native city*; conformably to the wish which he so pathetically expresses; and, that *he should die by no other hand than that of Achilles*.

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Yet, the death thus divinely fated to Hector was no consequence or evidence of divine displeasure towards him; it was not designed for the purpose of involving him in, but of separating him from, the impending evils:

ΖΕΥΣ, ὅς μιν ΠΛΕΟΝΕΣΣΙ ΜΕΤ' ΑΝΔΡΑΣΙ ΜΟΥΝΟΝ ΕΟΝΤΑ
ΤΙΜΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΥΘΑΙΝΕ.¹

Amidst an host, Jove honoured *him alone*.

It was planned with compassionate regard to his feelings and affections, in order that he might not witness the extreme miseries that were to overwhelm his unhappy family and nation: κρείσσον ἡμᾶς ἀποθανεῖν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ, ἢ

ἐπιδεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ κακά τοῦ ἐθνοῦς ἡμῶν, καὶ τῶν ἁγίων — “ *it is better for us to die in battle, than to behold the calamities of our country and our sanctuary,*”²

was the testimony borne to the feelings of a good and brave man, by the valiant and pious Judas Maccabeus; who was rescued by similar means, from similar afflictions. And the hand of Achilles was ordained to be the instrument

¹ Il. xv. 611.

² 1 Maccab. iii. 39. See ix. 20, 21.

of his death, that he might acquire an *augmentation of glory*, from the transcendent greatness of that instrument. Both were equally favorites of Heaven;

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virtus in utroque

*Summa fuit.*¹

As, therefore, *the death* of Hector was a special object of the divine concern, so also were *the circumstances of that death*: as Homer propounds by the mouth of Mercury to Priam;

ὥς τοι κηδονται μακαρες θεοι υἱος εἰνος,

καὶ νεκυος περ ἐόντος.²

The host of heaven, to whom he led

A life so grateful, *still regard him dead.*

So also, by that of Priam in reply:

ἦ ρ' αγαθον καὶ ἐναισιμια δωρα διδουναι

αθανατοις· ἐπει ουποτ' ἐμός παῖς, εἶποτ' ἐν γέ,

ληθετ' ἐνι μεγάροισι θῆων, οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσι.

τῶν οἱ ἐπεμνησαντο καὶ ἐν θανατοιο περ αἰσῇ.³

¹ Hor. Sat. i. 7. 14.

² Il. xxiv. 422.

³ Ib. 425.

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Those who inhabit the Olympian bower
 My son forgot not, in exalted power;
 And Heaven, that every virtue bears in mind,
Even to his lifeless ashes still is kind.

And by that also of Hecuba :

φιλος ησθα θεοισιν,

οἱ δ' αρα σευ κηδοντο και εν θανατοιο περ αιση.¹

Thou wert by Heaven approv'd,
 And by th' immortals *even in death* belov'd.

It was, therefore, a part of the same divine plan, and the last concluding circumstance in that preliminary to the downfall of Troy, that the body of Hector, after death inflicted by Achilles, should derive, *from the same instrument*, all the benefit, consolation, and honour, which the prevailing notions of the age deemed indispensably requisite for the peace of the separated spirit.

Those notions were not peculiar to the Greeks ; they were the common sentiments of

¹ Il. xxiv. 749.

mankind at large in that period of time. We CHAP.
find them prevalent in the sacred history of IV.
those early ages, and in some respects sanctioned even by the God of Israel. To receive
“*the burial of an ass,*” to be “*cast out to the*
“*beasts of the field, and the birds of heaven,*” was
a curse even from Jehovah; and, “*to be*
“*gathered unto the grave,*” to be “*lamented*
“*with the burnings of his fathers,*” was in like
manner his blessing. “Thus saith the Lord
“concerning Jehoiakim, King of Judah: they
“shall not lament for him, saying, Ah! My
“Lord! Or, Ah! His Glory! He shall be
“buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and
“cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.”¹
Whereas, of Zedekiah we read: “O Zedekiah,
“King of Judah, thus saith the Lord: Thou
“shalt die in peace; and with the burnings
“of thy fathers, the former kings of Judah,
“so shall they burn odours for thee; and
“they will lament thee, saying, Ah! My

¹ Jeremiah, xxii. 19.

CHAP. Lord!"¹ Such also was the secret purpose
IV. of the supreme mind in the Iliad, with respect to the sepulture of Hector.

When the united powers of Greece had assembled at Aulis, in the first year of the war, they received a figurative revelation of the divine intention in their expedition; comprehending an assurance of their ultimate success, together with an illustration of the progress, duration, and termination of their warfare. This was imparted to them under the figure of *a mother-bird*, with *eight* young ones; of which, *the eight* were successively devoured by a serpent; and the *parent*, the *ninth* in order, was devoured the last of all. This figure was divinely intended to signify to them; that after that *first* year, in which the portent was displayed, and which was engaged in making their extensive preparations and assembling their confederated forces, the *eight succeeding years* should be employed in capturing and

¹ Jeremiah, xxxiv. 5.

subjecting the several dependencies of the Trojan monarchy; but that in the last, or *tenth* year, they should crown all their labours by the capture and destruction of *the metropolitan city*.¹ It was in confidence of that assurance, that Diomede afterwards made his pious and valiant declaration;

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μαχησομεθ' εισοκε τεκμωρ
Ιλίου εύρωμεν· συν γαρ θεω ειληλουθμεν.²

Here Greece shall stay: or, if all Greece retire,

Myself shall stay, till Troy or I expire.

Myself and Sthenelus will fight for fame:

God bade us fight, and 'twas with God we came!

To the same assurance Nestor appealed, when he pronounced,

φημι γαρ ουν κατανευσαι υπερμενεα Κρονιωνα
ηματι τω, οτε νηυσιν επ' ωκυποροισιν εβαινον
Αργειοι, Τρωεσσι φονον και κηρα φεροντες,
αστραπτων επιδεξι', εναισιμα σηματα φαινων.³

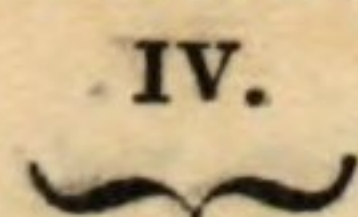
¹ Il. ii. 301—332.

² Il. ix. 48.

³ Il. ii. 350.

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On that great day, when first the martial train

Big with the fate of Ilion ploughed the main;

Jove on the right a prosperous signal sent,

And thunder rolling shook the firmament.

They had arrived at that *tenth* and *last* year; and every thing had hitherto happened in exact conformity to the divine notice and assurance. They had made themselves masters of all the dominions and dependances of Troy, and had now united and concentrated their whole army before the mother-city itself. The last scene of their conquests appears to have been the small town of Chrysa, dependant upon Cilician Thebe, and situated on the sea-coast, at the head of the bay of Adramyttium; from whence they had recently returned, after plundering the temple of Apollo and capturing the daughter of his priest; whom, in the distribution of the spoil, the army had allotted to Agamemnon, the chief of the confederacy.

At this critical moment, whilst they were taking their measures for the assault and sack of the city, and thus for accomplishing all

that remained of the divine purpose foreshown and pledged at Aulis; and when nothing appeared capable of disappointing or disturbing this concluding scene of their operations; a pestilence suddenly seized their army, and raged with such destructive fury, for nine days, that Achilles, excited by an anxiety for the common welfare, proposed in council, that some priest or other inspired person should be consulted without delay, as to the occasion of that severe visitation, and as to the means by which it might be averted; in order that no time should be lost in appeasing the offended power who had caused the calamity. Public solicitude, and reverence toward heaven, could have been the only motives which actuated Achilles in making that proposal; since he was totally ignorant at the moment of the real cause that had provoked the infliction.

The priest Calchas, feeling himself called upon to answer the demand, hesitated in making a disclosure; knowing, that the cause must be declared to exist in the person of Agamem-

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non. He therefore first claimed the protection of Achilles, whose appeal he rose to answer, should the disclosure of the cause raise up against him any powerful enemy. The irascible temper of Achilles, incensed by the mere suggestion that such a consequence could follow the faithful discharge of his priestly office, urged him to promise vehemently and emphatically the protection of his arm, against any individual who should so unworthily receive the sacred response; even if it were Agamemnon himself. Upon the faith of that pledge, Chalcas distinctly informed the assembly; “that
“the pestilence was sent by Apollo, solely
“on account of his priest of Chrysa having
“been treated with indignity, and of the
“daughter of that priest being detained in
“captivity, by Agamemnon.” And he was further commissioned to denounce; “that the
“pestilence would continue its havoc among
“the Greeks, until Agamemnon should have
“restored the maiden unransomed to her
“father, and accompanied with expiatory sa-

“crifices, for the aggression committed against
“the god by the outrage exercised upon his
“priest.”

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The selfish and malignant spirit with which Agamemnon unexpectedly received this sacred and important public communication, and the strong pledge of protection which he himself had so recently given, conspired to excite in a very eminent degree the noble but fiery heart of Achilles. He surveyed with unbounded indignation the reluctance evinced by Agamemnon to suffer a personal privation for the common safety, in the face of an inspired oracle demanding that privation ; and he burst forth into terms of vehement invective and reproach against the head of the confederacy. Agamemnon, exasperated by the just severity of Achilles' attack, directed at once all the inflamed feelings of his breast against that animated prince ; and being now wounded in his capacity of supreme commander, he determined to exercise the power with which the confederacy had invested him, and forcibly to indemnify himself for the loss of the maiden

CHAP. whom he found he must now resign, by another
IV. maiden whom Achilles had received as his
allotment of booty.

The consummate baseness, and abuse of authority, displayed in this last injurious and insulting measure, raised the fury of Achilles to the highest pitch to which it could be exalted. He contested not Agamemnon's right as captain-general, to which he had himself consented in common with the other chiefs; but he immediately conceived the inflexible resolution of finding his own revenge, by exercising those rights which he reserved to himself as an independant prince. His *will* suddenly took a fixed and determined course, from which he resolved it never should relax; and he bound himself by a most solemn and sacred oath before the assembly of princes, to withdraw himself and his forces from the common cause, and to leave the Greeks to terminate the war as they might, without an hope of receiving at any future time any succour or support from him.

Thus, at the close of the tenth and last year

of the war, a feud arose between these two great princes, to all appearance as implacable and interminable as it had been sudden and unforeseen; and thus, the strength of Greece became all at once maimed and debilitated, and the operations of the war, which had hitherto proceeded so uniformly and successfully, became on a sudden interrupted and suspended, at the very moment they were hastening to give completion to the last scene of the drama.

But the obstruction to the military operations was not the whole, nor the principal, effect of the secession of Achilles. He was designed by heaven to be *the instrument* for executing *a particular deed — at a particular time — preparatory to the overthrow of Troy*; he was to encounter Hector, and Hector was to fall by his hand, within the short space of twenty days. But now, he had fixed the determination of his inflexible will to an absolute cessation from all further action in the field; and was even projecting his return to Greece, with all his forces.

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CHAP. Here then was a *nodus* to be disembroiled.

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~~~~~ The life of Hector stood by the decree of fate, that is, of *the divine determination*, in the way of the fated destruction of Troy;

οἷος γὰρ ἐρύετο Ἰλίου Ἑκτωρ.<sup>1</sup>

Hector, alone, the fence of Ilium stood :

That life was of necessity to be removed, before that destruction could have place ; and, by the same decree, Achilles, and Achilles alone, was to remove it. But the will of Achilles, which had hitherto, for upwards of nine years, proceeded in direct conformity to, and concurrence with, the will and design of heaven, had now suddenly changed its direction into a course diametrically opposite to the tendency of that supreme will ; and the wills of the instrumental agent and of the sovereign directing agent were brought into such positive contradiction, that either the latter must be foiled in his purpose, and must submit to the rule of his instrument ; or, the will of the instru-

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<sup>1</sup> Il. vi. 403.



ment must be brought back, by the contrivance and power of the supreme agent, into a conformity with the original designs of the latter. CHAP. IV.

Had the will of the former prevailed, and had Achilles executed all the purposes of his own determination, the divine plan must have been unexpectedly thwarted, and ultimately frustrated. Hector would not have fallen, and Troy would not have been overthrown. But we know, that such was not the case; we know, that notwithstanding every effort of Achilles to hold fast by the purposes of his own vindictive will, he acts throughout the poem in direct opposition to those purposes, and with unvarying subserviency to the contrary rule of the Divine will; that he slays Hector in the field, *which he had determined not to enter*, and that he delivers up for honourable burial his body, *which he had determined to consign to the dogs and vultures of Troy*.

The *means* by which this wonderful and apparently impossible issue was produced, constitute the main action and entire frame of the poem, and concurrently unfold its true



CHAP. primary argument; which attends it throughout;  
 IV.  commences with the disorder first introduced by the feud; reveals itself in the course and method of the divine government for bringing Achilles back into the scene of action; and extends to the last effect of that action, in consummating the divine purpose, by *the death* of Hector, and by *the circumstances* inseparably connected with that death. This is the *ἐν μέρει*—*the one circumstance* of the war, which Homer selected as it were *θεσπεσιος*—*by a divine influence*, for the primary argument of his Iliad. Let us now examine, how those means worked their effect.

I. In the first book, twelve days after the quarrel of the chiefs, we find the supreme mind secretly engaged in revolving the means of neutralizing the natural effects of that quarrel upon the predetermined catastrophe of Troy. Had *the will* of Achilles not been perverted by the passions excited by that feud, the chain of events would have continued to proceed, uninterruptedly, in the direct course in which it was actually proceeding, and by



that course would regularly have arrived at CHAP.  
its final term; no new counsels would have IV.  
been rendered necessary. But, the occurrence  
of that interruption necessarily called for a  
new exercise of the divine wisdom and power;  
and for a new scheme of causes and effects,  
which should terminate in constraining the  
will of Achilles to return again into its former  
channel of conformity; and thus accomplish  
the work to which he had been ordained,  
and which could only be accomplished by  
*the concurrence of his will.*

Accordingly, when, on that twelfth day,  
Thetis, to present the prayer of her son, broke  
in upon the privacy of Jupiter; who, though  
personally absent at the time in Ethiopia, well  
knew what had been passing on the plain of  
Troy:

— ὁ γὰρ τ' ἐν οἶδεν ἅπαντα,<sup>1</sup>

— for well he *all things* knew;

she found him alone, and immersed in deep  
meditation:

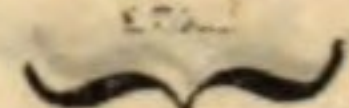
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<sup>1</sup> Od. xx. 75.



## CHAP.

## IV.



εὖρεν δ' ευρυοπα Κρονιδην ατερ ἡμενον αλλων.<sup>1</sup>

There, far apart, and high above the rest

The thunderer sat.

The *object* of the prayer which she conveyed, was to obtain Jupiter's favour and support to the scheme which Achilles, in his fury, had formed, for avenging himself of Agamemnon. Its *purport*, was to beseech him to promote the slaughter of the Greeks by the Trojans, whilst Achilles himself should remain aloof from the war; in order that he might, by that means, compel them to a recognition and acknowledgment of their dependance upon his arm for success, and that he might thus crown himself with a false and spurious glory, at their cost. But the entire mind, and secret desire, with which the object of that prayer was sought by Achilles, was fully revealed in the avowal which he made, five days afterwards, to Patroclus; namely, that himself and Patroclus remaining secure, until the rest of the

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<sup>1</sup> Il. i. 498.



Grecian power should be annihilated, *they two* CHAP.  
might then set forward securely, with their IV.  
Myrmidons, to the final conquest, and enjoy,  
without a rival or a partner, the glory of  
having extinguished Troy :

μητε τις ουν Τρωων θανατον φυγοι, ὅσσοι εασι,

ΜΗΤΕ ΤΙΣ ΑΡΓΕΙΩΝ· ΝΩΙΝ δ' εκδυμεν' ολεθρον·

οφρ' οιοι Τροινς ιερα κρηδεμνα λυωμεν.<sup>1</sup>

That not one Trojan might be left alive,

And *not a Greek of all the race survive*;

Might *only* we the vast destruction shun,

And *only* we destroy the accursed town!

Such was the matter, and such the spirit  
of the *εξαισιος αρη* — *the iniquitous prayer*, which  
Thetis ventured to advocate with Jupiter; for  
so it is expressly designated by Homer :

————— Θετιδος δ' ΕΞΑΙΣΙΟΝ αρην<sup>2</sup>

The *iniquitous* request

Of Thetis —

Essential error, fatal to the whole argument,

<sup>1</sup> Il. xvi. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. xv. 598.



CHAP. has been produced and perpetuated by a  
 IV. neglect of the proper force of the word *ἐξαισιος*,  
 by which Homer here characterizes that prayer. He uses that word only upon this one occasion in the *Iliad*; but in the *Odyssey* he employs it twice,<sup>1</sup> where he shows, that he understands it always in *an evil sense*. The scholiasts explain it by, *παρα το καθηκον*—*ουκ αγαθον*—*βλαβον*—*αδικον*· *τουναντιον γαρ εναισιμα, τα καθηκοντα και δικαια*—“*unjust*; for the opposite is *εναισιμα*, what “*is fitting and just*.”<sup>2</sup>—*την παρανομον ευχην, και εξω αισης και μοιρας*.<sup>3</sup> Damm interprets it, *iniquus, injustus, immoderatus, injurius*, but fails in the proper application of those senses to the object. That prayer was replete with criminality and impiety; but, in the state of extreme and fevered excitement into which the temper of Achilles had been wrought, this consideration was entirely obscured to his discernment, and the many excellencies of his

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* iv. 690. xvii. 577.

<sup>2</sup> *Homer. Villoison. Schol.*

<sup>3</sup> *Porph. Ζήτημ. I 2.*



nature were smothered for the time, by the exorbitancy of his passion. CHAP. IV.

But, besides the criminality of the matter and spirit of the prayer, it proceeded from a will self-impelled into an opposition to the order of things ordained according to the rule of the supreme will, and which had hitherto proceeded by that rule; so that it was, in effect, a prayer that the supreme disposer would change his own plans, and adapt the issues of things to the rule of Achilles's disordered will, however adverse it might be to his own. Upon receiving this presumptuous and iniquitous prayer, therefore, Jupiter made no immediate reply, but remained for a long time in deep and thoughtful silence:

την δ' οὐτι προσεφη νεφεληγερετα Ζευς,

αλλ' ακεων δην ἔηστο.<sup>1</sup>

Thus she: but Jove *long time in silence* held

The sacred counsels of his breast concealed.

It was not until Thetis manifested her impatience for an answer, that she at length obtained

<sup>1</sup> Il. i. 511.



CHAP. one. And what was its quality? It testified

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none of that prompt and cordial compliance, which has been so commonly and so unaccountably ascribed to it; none of that explicit and unreserved yielding to her instances, which distinguishes Jupiter's answers to Minerva on different occasions;<sup>1</sup> on the contrary, after keeping her, *δην* — *a long time* in suspense, while he considered how he should shape his answer, yet knowing that the substance of her petition coincided to a certain extent with his own new but hidden designs; at length, *μεγ' οχθησας*<sup>2</sup> — *drawing a deep sigh*, he pronounced this brief and oracular response:

— *εμοι δε κε ταυτα ΜΕΛΗΣΕΤΑΙ, οφρα τελεσσω.*<sup>3</sup>

*But, go! to bring the object of thy prayer*

*To its due end, shall surely be my care.*

In other words, “*leave these matters to ME.*” A response, reserved, vague, and indefinite, and stamped with all the character of equivoca-

<sup>1</sup> See Il. xxii. 184. &c. <sup>2</sup> Ib. 517.

<sup>3</sup> Ib. 523. “*Hæc mihi curæ erunt, donec perfecerim,*” as in v. 82; not, “*ut perficiam.*”



tion which distinguished the recorded re- CHAP.  
sponses of the ancient Grecian oracles; κιβδηλα, IV.  
or, as Cicero described them, “*flexiloqua*,  
“*obscura, ambigua*.”<sup>1</sup> It contained, therefore,  
something *adverse* to the wishes of the peti-  
tioner; for, as the same authority has re-  
marked, “*omnis prædictio mali tum probatur*,  
“*cum ad prædictionem cautio adjungitur*”<sup>2</sup>—  
“a prediction may be known to portend *ill*,  
“if it be attended with any thing of *caution*,  
“or *reserve*.” That the sense of μελησεταί is  
altogether indefinite, and therefore of doubtful  
interpretation in this passage, may be per-  
ceived in the sentiment with which Autome-  
don, after invoking Jupiter—ευξαμενος Διὶ πατρι,  
throws his javelin :

αλλ’ ἦτοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται.

ἦσ’ ὦ γὰρ καὶ ἐγὼ· ταδὲ κεν Διὶ πάντα ΜΕΛΗΣΕΙ.<sup>3</sup>

Events belong to heaven: my spear I’ll throw:

’Tis Jove’s concernment how to guide the blow!

<sup>1</sup> Cicero de Divin. lib. ii. c. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Id. c. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xvii. 514. See xxiii. 724.



CHAP. So likewise is the word τελεσσω of doubtful  
 IV. import, since it must depend upon the determination and issue of μελησεται. The passage has been commonly taken as if it merely said, ταυτα τελεσσω, “*I will perform these things;*” whereas it says, εμοι ταυτα μελησεται, “*I will consider of, or*” “*concern myself with, these things;*” and adds, οφρα τελεσσω, “*until I bring them to an ultimate*” “*decision and effect.*” Such, then, was the whole of the answer obtained by Thetis that bears any relation to the object which had induced her to repair to Olympus; and, in confirmation of the mysterious truth latent in that equivocal reply, Jupiter made in her presence the awful nod, which fixed irrevocably the determination of HIS WILL.

The *silence* of Jupiter, which followed the delivery of Thetis’s prayer, was a manifest evidence of a reluctancy to speak, and a desire to avoid a reply. Herodotus, describes, in the same manner, a similar affection of reluctancy in Cræsus, when interrogated on the pile:

Κροισος δε τεως μεν σιγην εχειν ερωτωμενον μετα



δε, ὡς ἠναγκαζέτο, εἰπεῖν<sup>1</sup> — “ Cræsus, when he CHAP.  
 “ was questioned, remained for some time in IV.  
 “ *silence*; but afterwards, when he was *urgently*  
 “ *pressed*, he said, &c. :” The historian re-  
 lates, that his answer was ἀσημα, *obscure*;  
 so that he was further pressed for an explana-  
 tion, but the sanguineness of Thetis, accepted  
 the answer of Jupiter in its most favourable  
 sense, and she, therefore, sought for no ex-  
 planation. Whereas, (as the Pythian observed  
 to Cræsus, when he complained of the duplicity  
 of the oracles,) “ if she had been prudent, she  
 “ would have done so; but since she neither  
 “ apprehended what was said to her, nor de-  
 “ manded any explanation, she could blame  
 “ herself alone for whatever disappointment  
 “ might ensue.” τὸν δὲ χρεὶν, εὐ μελλοντα βουλευεσθαι,  
 ἐπειρεσθαι — οὐ συλλαβὼν τε τὸ ρηθὲν, οὐδ’ ἐπ’ ἀνείρομενος,  
 ἑωυτὸν αἰτίον ἀποφαίνεται.<sup>2</sup> From the natural and  
 common symptoms of affections in the human  
 nature, we are to reason to the affections of  
 fictitious deities, to whom human feelings

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ii. c. 86, <sup>2</sup> Herod. ib. c. 91,



CHAP. and human passions are ascribed. In the  
 IV.  case of Jupiter, his *long silence* undeniably proved, that he was more engaged with his own secret meditations, than with the wishes of his petitioner.

The *sigh*, which at length succeeded to the silence, and with which Jupiter introduced his dark and covered answer, was a corroborating proof of that reluctance; and betokened an inward sentiment, very different from that of a simple assent to the wishes of Achilles. It testified an affection, similar to that which Homer makes him reveal in the opening of the *Odyssey*:

ω ποποι, οἷον δὴ νῦ θεοὺς βροτοὶ αἰτιῶνται·  
 ἐξ ἡμεῶν γὰρ φασὶ κακ' ἐμμεναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ  
 σφῆσιν ατασθαλιῇσιν ὑπὲρ μορον αλγέ' ἐχουσιν.<sup>1</sup>

Perverse mankind! whose wills, created free,  
 Charge all their woes on absolute decree;  
 All to the dooming gods their guilt translate;  
 And ills incur, beyond the doom of fate.

It is very remarkable, that Socrates is made

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<sup>1</sup> Odyss. i. 32.



by Plato to apply this very passage to the case of those, who petition heaven for that which afterwards proves calamitous, and who then wish *to recall their prayers*. “The generality of mankind,” says he, “would not wish to avoid many things, which, when present, are more injurious than beneficial. Or rather, they would pray for them, while they are absent, but, in a little time, they would recant their prayer, and pray against that which they before had prayed for. So that I question if it be not perfectly true, that men accuse the gods unjustly when they say, that they derive evils from them; and that they ought to acknowledge, that *‘through their own crimes,’ or their own follies,* *‘They ill incur beyond the doom of fate.’*”<sup>1</sup>

οἱ πολλοὶ οὐκ ἀποσχοίντο ἀν πολλῶν ἃ παρόντα βλαπτέει μάλλον ἢ ὠφελεῖ· ἀλλὰ καὶ εὐξαιντο ἀν γενεσθαι, εἴτῳ μὴ παρόντα τυγχάνει. ὀλίγον δὲ ἐπισχόντες, ἐνίοτε παλινῳδουσιν, ἀνευχομένοι ἅττ’ ἀν τοπρωτὸν εὐξώνται. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἀπορῶ μὴ ὥς ἀληθῶς ματὴν θεοὺς ἄνθρωποι αἰτιῶνται, ἐξ ἐκείνων φάμενοι κακὰ σφισὶν εἶναι. οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ “σφῆσιν εἴτε ἀτασθαλιαῖσιν” εἴτε ἀφροσυναῖς χρῆ εἰπεῖν,

ὑπερ μὲν αὖτε ἔχουσι.

Alcibiades, 2. c. 4.



CHAP.

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The *nod*, which followed the response of Jupiter, was not a mere gesture of courteous assent; much that was mysterious was betokened by its awful effects. It was not given solely to indulge the capricious passions of a man; it was the signal of *fate*, that is, of *an original purpose in the uninfluenced will of all-wise and almighty power*. This is the true, Homeric notion of *fate*. Damm soundly explains it in the same manner. “This the poet touches upon, in Il. iv. 1 — 74, where he teaches, that the issues of things depend upon the counsel of Jupiter; and that *fate*, is nothing else than the divine counsel in the government of things, which is hidden from man.”<sup>1</sup> And again: “Those of the ancients who considered *fate* as something distinct from the gods, were in error; the fact is certain, that *fate*, thoroughly understood, is no other than *the divine decree*, concerning the existence of the world and all things which come to pass in it.”<sup>2</sup> The supreme wisdom, and sovereign disposer, did

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<sup>1</sup> Damm. Lex. Hom. p. 1481.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. p. 382.



not intend, by that nod, to signify his acceptance of a rule of government from the will, much less from the disordered and perverted will of a mortal being: CHAP.  
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αἰεὶ γὰρ Δίος κρείστων νοός, ἢ περ ἀνδρῶν.<sup>1</sup>

In every plan,  
The mind of Jove excels the mind of man.

The nod was, in fact, the ordering of destiny with respect to a new and hidden chain of causes and effects, which he had decreed in the inscrutable counsels of his own mind; and which he was then on the eve of calling into action, for remedying the derangement caused by the perverse exercise of free-will in his human agent, and for securing the ultimate fulfilment of his own original purpose.

Nothing could have led more certainly to a total failure in seeking for the primary argument, than the hasty and inconsiderate assumption, *in limine* of the narrative of the poem, that Thetis had entirely succeeded in

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xvi. 688.



CHAP. her intercession with Jupiter; that she had

IV.  induced him to embrace the object of her son's prayer for the rule of his own future acting; therefore, that his future plans and her desires, became one and the same thing; and, consequently, that she was privy to the object of those plans, from the time she first declared her wishes. Under this error, which, were it not for its rooted inveteracy, would appear, on the stating, to be absurd even to fatuity, Pope makes his translation of Jupiter's answer to Thetis :

But part in peace, *secure thy prayer is sped.*

So likewise Cowper :

My concern shall be

How *best* I may perform *thy full desire.*

And Morrice :

What you request *I surely will perform.*

And so also the French translator, with peculiar grace of compliance :

*Vos vœux sont exaucés, allez, belle Déesse,*

Recevez, en partant, le sceau de ma promesse.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Homère, par M. de Rochefort, l. 552.



There is not a word in Homer, to authorize CHAP. the determination given in these versions, IV. That determination was first given to the passage, in an age of declining and short-sighted criticism; and it has ever since been received upon trust, without scrutiny or question. Wolfe, likewise speaks of Jupiter's "design *declared to Thetis* — *consilium Jovis Thetidi declaratum;*"<sup>1</sup> and Heyne, of "Jupiter being so *entirely overcome* by the entreaties of Thetis, as to direct the course of events to *the issue which she wished* — "Jupiter Thetidis precibus *expugnatus*, *tacitumque ejus consilium*, adducendi res *ad exitum quam vellet.*"<sup>2</sup> Yet we read in the poem, that Jupiter made no declaration of his design to Thetis; and that he brought events to the issue, of all others the most opposite to her wishes.

That Thetis was not put into possession of the secret designs of Jupiter, we have evidence immediately after her departure. No

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<sup>1</sup> Pref. ad Hom.

<sup>2</sup> Tom. viii. p. 783.



CHAP. sooner was she gone, than Juno entered his  
 IV. presence, aware that Thetis had just obtained  
 a private conference with him; and sensible  
 also, from the effect of the nod, that some  
 new determination of future events had co-  
 incidentally been made, by the author of fate.  
 Suspecting that Thetis had been admitted to  
 a confidence from which she herself was  
 excluded, she attempted to penetrate his pur-  
 pose. Jupiter rebuked her scrutiny, declaring,  
 that neither gods nor men should know the  
 counsel which he determined to keep secret;  
 but at the same time, he assured her, *that when  
 the fit season for disclosing it should arrive, she  
 should be made acquainted with his design before  
 every other deity.*

Ἥρη, μὴ δὴ παντὰς ἐμούς ἐπιελπεο μύθους  
 εἰδήσειν, χαλεποὶ τοὶ ἐσὺντ' ἀλοχῶ περ εὐσση.  
 ἀλλ' ὃν μὲν κ' ἐπιεικὲς ἀκουέμεν, οὐτὶς ἐπειτὰ  
 οὔτε θεῶν πρότερος τόνγ' εἰσεται, οὐτ' ἀνθρώπων.  
 ὃν δὲ κ' ἐγὼν ἀπ' ἀνέυθε θεῶν ἐθελοίμι νοῆσαι,  
 μὴ τί σὺ ταῦτα ἑκάστα διείρεο, μῆδε μεταλλά.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Il. i. 545.



The scholiast interprets the fourth of these lines thus, ὅντινα λόγον προσηκει ΣΕ ακουσαι—“what-  
 “ever matter is fitting *for thee* to hear;” yet, the context plainly requires that we should understand, θεους και ανθρωπους—“*for gods or men,*” generally, and not σε, “*for thee,*” in particular. Pope follows the scholiast in this error; but he has caught the true sense of the next line: for, ουτις εισεται προτερος σου—*no one shall know it before thee*; signifies, in the language of Homer, συ ειση προτερος παντων—*thou shalt know it before all others*. So, in Il. viii. 253. ουτις προτερος Δαναων ευξατο Τυδειδαο, signifies, Τυδειδης ευξατο προτερος παντων Δαναων: “*antevertit cæteros,*” as Heyne interprets it. So again in Il. xvii. 14. ου γαρ τις προτερος Τρωων Πατροκλον βαλε, signifies, εγω γαρ Πατροκλον εβαλον προτερος παντων Τρωων: “*fui enim “is qui primum (ante Hectorem) vulnus ei “attulit.”*” Heyne. It is the same in this sentence; which thus contains, both *a distinct assurance* that Thetis did not know it, and *also a positive promise* that Juno should know it before Thetis. Jupiter therefore declares:

Seek not thou to find

The secret counsels of almighty mind:

CHAP.

IV.



## CHAP.

## IV.

Involved in darkness lies the great decree,

Nor can the depths of fate be pierced by thee.

*What may be known, THYSELF THE FIRST shalt know ;*

*THE FIRST of gods above, and men below ;*

But thou, nor they, shall search the thoughts that roll

Deep in the close recesses of my soul.

The spirit of this assurance, compared with Jupiter's subsequent conduct towards Juno, and with the ambiguous and oracular nature of his reply to Thetis, sufficiently demonstrate ; that, however sanguinely the latter goddess might have interpreted the answer which she had obtained from Jupiter, she still remained in total ignorance of the reality and extent of the designs to which he had affixed the stamp of fate ; and therefore, that the wishes of her son embodied in her own prayer, afforded no clue whatever for detecting those designs : so far were they from prescribing the rule by which they were to be governed. She had been empowered indeed by Jupiter, to impart to him some general notices of future contingencies ; such as, the shortness of his life, if he continued to war against Troy, and his longevity, if he would relinquish military



glory and return to his own home.<sup>1</sup> She was also enabled to warn him, in a vague and general manner, that one of the bravest of the Myrmidons would perish by Trojan hands, during his own life-time.<sup>2</sup> But although Jupiter communicated thus much to Thetis, yet she was unapprised of the particulars of time and circumstance, with which those predictions were to be fulfilled. For there were many things which Jupiter reserved, ἀπαρκευθε θεῶν — for his own secret and sole knowledge; and into which none were permitted to penetrate — μεταλλειν. Such was the development of his design on the present occasion. Of this we have proof, as soon as that design is fully revealed to Thetis, by Achilles being forced to return into the field of action. Instead of finding in it the accomplishment of her wishes; which were, *to secure him from the fate of war, by obtaining Jupiter's sanction to his secession*; she suddenly discovers their total failure, and bursts forth into wailing and lamentation:

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xviii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Il. ix. 410.



## CHAP.

## IV.



τον δ' αὐτε προσέειπε θεῖς καταδακρυχέουσα·

ωκυμóρος Δὴ μοι, τέκος, εἴσεαι, οἱ' ἀγορεύεις.<sup>1</sup>

A flood of tears, at this, the goddess shed:

“ Ah *then*, I see thee dying, see thee dead!”

She could not have testified surprise and excess of disappointment more strongly, than by that exclamation.

The proper season for making the promised disclosure to Juno, does not arrive till the fifth day, and in the fifteenth book; and the varied incidents of those first five days, proceed without any discernible evidence of the real intentions of Jupiter. The mind, therefore, waits in expectation of the fulfilment of the promise; which is to reveal those intentions, and to direct the view to the ultimate object of the action.

At the opening of the second book, during the night following his conference with Juno, we discover Jupiter occupied in determining the means of operating the effect which he had in purpose; and which at the same time would produce that *τιμή*, or *honour* for Achilles, which

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xviii 94.



he had ambiguously engaged to Thetis, but, CHAP.  
to the true nature of which he hitherto affords IV.  
no clue. He at length resolves, to cause  
the immediate prosecution of the war, notwithstanding the secession of Achilles; which he accomplishes, by sending a delusive dream to Agamemnon, promising to him the capture of Troy. Upon the faith of that divine assurance, Agamemnon proceeds, the following morning, by means of a stratagem, to assemble and marshal the rest of the confederated forces; and to animate them to engage with the enemy. The Trojans, on the other hand, encouraged by the absence of Achilles, acquire a confidence and a spirit of which they had before displayed no example during all the preceding years of the war; and, quitting the defences of their city, venture into the plain and offer battle to the Greeks. Meanwhile Achilles perseveres in his furious determination, of withholding all assistance, and of ceasing from all further action; and, after a long and varied series of splendid conflicts and achievements, during four days, slaughter



CHAP. and discomfiture accumulate upon the army  
 IV. of the Greeks.

Upon the fourth day, however, Jupiter deems it fitting to make to Juno a *partial disclosure* of his design: he informs her, that it is his intention not to restrain the successes of Hector and the Trojans,

πριν ωρθαι παρα ναυφι ποδωκεα Πηλειωνα,  
 ηματι τω, οτ' αν οι μεν επι πρυμνησι μαχωνται,  
 στεινει εν αινοτατω, περι Πατροκλοιο πεσοντος.<sup>1</sup>

Ev'n till the day when certain fates ordain

That stern Achilles, *his Patroclus slain,*

*Shall rise in vengeance,* and lay waste the plain.

Here, he opens to her view an *intermediate stage* in the progress of his plan; which should terminate the state of things she was then witnessing, and which should introduce an entirely new order of events. This place, as Heyne justly remarks, “is notable from its “relation to *the economy of the poem*; for now,

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<sup>1</sup> Il. viii. 474.



“Jupiter more openly avows his design — CHAP.  
 “locus notabilis propter *æconomiam carminis*, IV.  
 “nunc enim *apertius* Jupiter consilium suum  
 “profitetur.”<sup>1</sup> We here learn, that the operation of the war, which, if a resistance had not been interposed by Achilles, would have proceeded straight to its *ultimate end*, in the catastrophe of Hector; is diverted for a time from that object, and directed to a new and *intermediate* one, namely, the overcoming the interposed resistance. Achilles himself becomes, during this period, the object upon which that operation is designed to act; until the resistance occurring in him be overcome, and the operation be enabled to proceed again, by its former course, to its true and proper end in the person of Hector.

But, was this favouring *the spirit* of Achilles’ supplication; or directing events according to *his wishes* conveyed by Thetis? was this a demonstration of “the *happy success* of that “goddess’s prayer,” as Heyne considers it?—

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<sup>1</sup> Homer. Heyne, tom. i. p. 442. not.



CHAP. “*dea id exsequitur tam felici successu, ut pre-*

IV.

“*cibus Jupiter annuat.*”<sup>1</sup> Had Achilles conceived the thought, that such an issue as *the death of Patroclus* could have been involved in the train of events which were to follow from his prayer; we are sure, that he would have strove to recall that prayer, with agony of soul—*παλινῶδεν, ανευχομενος ἅτλα το πρῶτον ηυχετο*, and would at once have extinguished every spark of his resentment to Agamemnon. But, the rage of his heart had suspended all action of his reason; he was blinded to the possibility of such a consequence resulting from the causes which his presumption had called forth; and therefore, on the following day, Jupiter thus finally reveals to Juno the entire sequel of his design:

Αχαιους

αυτις αποστρεψησιν, αναλκιδα φυζαν ενορσας·

φευγοντες δ' εν νηυσι πολυκληϊσι πεσωσι

Πηλειδεω Αχιλλης· ο δ' ανστησει ον εταIRON

— Πατροκλον, τον δε κτενει εγχει φαιδιμος Εκτωρ

<sup>1</sup> Id. Argum. L. i. p. 4.



Ἰλίου προπαροίθε, πόλεις ὀλεσάντ' αἰζήνους  
 τοὺς ἄλλους, μετὰ δ', υἱὸν ἔμῳ Σαρπηδόνα διόν·  
 τοῦ δὲ χολωσάμενος κτενεὶ Ἑκτορά διος Ἀχιλλεύς.  
 ἐκ τοῦδ' ἂν τοι ἐπεὶ τὰ παλιῶξιν παρὰ νηῶν  
 αἰὲν ἐγὼ τεύχοιμι διαμπερές, εἰσοκ' Ἀχαιοὶ  
 Ἴλιον αἰψὺ ἔλοιεν, Ἀθηναίης διὰ βούλας.<sup>1</sup>

Greece, chas'd by Troy, ev'n to Achilles' fleet,  
 Shall fall by thousands at the hero's feet.  
 He, not unyielding, to the hostile plain  
 Shall urge *Patroclus*, — but shall urge in vain; —  
 Vanquished at last by *Hector's* lance, he dies:  
 Then, nor till then, shall great *Achilles* rise,  
 And lo! that instant *god-like HECTOR* dies.  
 From that great hour the war's whole fortune turns;  
 Pallas assists, and lofty Ilion burns.

In this *second* disclosure, Jupiter lays  
 open the *whole* of his plan: “*exposito disertius*  
 “*consilio suo, quod Trojanos superiores pugna*  
 “*esse decretum apud se habet, donec Patroclo*  
 “*occiso Achilles arma iterum capturus sit*” —  
 “He *more distinctly* (i. e. than in the first

<sup>1</sup> Il. xv. 61—71.

<sup>2</sup> Homer. Heyne. Argum. ad Il. xv. T. ii. p. 124.



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IV.

“ disclosure), reveals his design, says Heyne;  
 “ that Achilles shall *resume his arms*, in con-  
 “ sequence of *the slaughter of Patroclus*.”

But he does much more, for so much he had revealed in the former disclosure; he here proceeds to declare *the sequel*, namely, that the resistance occurring in Achilles being by that means overcome, the operation of the war should proceed again, without further interruption, to its destined ends, proximate and ultimate; proximate, in the death of Hector, the circumstances of which constitute the limit of the poem; and ultimate, in the destruction of Troy, which lies beyond that limit.

This full and unreserved declaration of Jupiter, compared with the whole narrative of the poem, manifests the nullity of Wolfe's distinction, although evidently made under a complacent sense of superior and original discrimination: “ *nos de consilio Homeri*, non “ *Jovis* quærimus — I am inquiring concerning the intention of *Homer*, not of *Jupiter*.” For, it is in the mind of the chief agent that we are to discover the poet's



mind ; and certainly it is in the mind of Jupiter here disclosed, that Homer expects us to discern his own mind, with respect to the scheme and argument of the Iliad. This is therefore a distinction without a difference ; by the overweening sagacity of which, Wolfe destroyed his own means of unravelling the riddle. From not attending to *the ambiguity*, in Jupiter's response to Thetis, and from not perceiving *the promise*, contained in his reply to Juno, Heyne also, like those who preceded him, has missed the path which would have conducted him by a straight course to the issue of the poem ; and has entangled himself in a labyrinth, which could never lead him to that issue. Upon those two pregnant lines, which Homer has placed in his first book, as beacons to illuminate the prospect ; viz.

ἐμοὶ δὲ κὲ ταῦτα μελησεται, ὅφρα τελεσσω.

And,

οὐτὶς ἐπειτα

οὔτε θεῶν πρότερος τούγ' εἰσεται.

Heyne has made no reflection whatever, either



CHAP. in his *Notes*,<sup>1</sup> or *Observations*.<sup>2</sup> And from these  
 IV. oversights has sprung that excess of learned temerity, I could almost say sacrilege, with which, after pointing out, in his *argumentum*, the intimate connexion between the *first* and *second* disclosure with relation to the *economy* of the poem, (the one disclosing, he says, “*apertius*,” the other “*disertius*,” and with additional circumstances;) he would nevertheless expunge from the *Iliad* the whole of the *latter* most essential passage.<sup>3</sup> The unjustifiable grounds, upon which he would adventure so wanton and destructive a violation of the text, will be particularly considered in the end of the last chapter.

All the several great and splendid achievements of the first five days, with which the first fifteen books so richly abound, are working progressively, under the guidance of the supreme agent, to the ends revealed to Juno in these successive disclosures of his final plan; yet,

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<sup>1</sup> Tom. i. p. 60, 63.

<sup>2</sup> Tom. iv. p. 138, 145.

<sup>3</sup> Tom. ii. p. 130. Tom. vii. p. 18.



at the same time, in apparent concord with the desires of Achilles, conveyed in the prayer of Thetis. The calamities of war multiply upon the Greeks, with but little fluctuation; and the superiority of the Trojans increases every day, with circumstances calculated to sting the heart of Achilles, had not every sensibility to honour, to shame, and even to common humanity, been indurated and deadened by the exorbitancy of his passion. Events arise, in continual succession, of every kind best adapted to rouse and rekindle those sensibilities; but without producing any other effect than nourishing his infuriated resentment against his own countrymen, and strengthening the perverse determinations of his own will. The adventurous and novel enterprises of Hector and the Trojans, solely in consequence of his absence from the conflict; their perfidious breach of the truce; the glorious and stimulating example of Diomedes; the exasperating challenge and taunts of Hector; the bitter sufferings of his own countrymen, and of his most illus-



CHAP. trious friends amongst them ; all these consi-  
IV. derations pass unheeded before his view, and  
are disappointed of their natural results, by  
the unnatural operation of his will.

When the reflections of his own mind prove thus unavailing for softening his obduracy, and calling him forth again into action ; a well-selected embassy is appointed to press and enforce those considerations upon his feelings, in the persons of Ulysses, Ajax, and Phoenix. But although he receives those illustrious chiefs with a frank and courteous friendship, and although he patiently listens to all the vigorous representations by which they severally discharge the office with which they have been intrusted ; yet they are compelled to return, without having effected the slightest change in his will or in his feelings ; either by the concessions which they were authorized to make on the part of Agamemnon ; or by the eloquent reasoning of Ulysses, the galling reproaches of Ajax, or the affectionate and pious expostulations of Phoenix. He only avails himself of the occasion which they



afford him, to confirm with increased tenacity the declaration of his unaltered purpose : CHAP.  
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Διογενες Λαερτιάδῃ, πολυμηχαν' Οδυσσεν,  
 χρη μὲν δὴ τὸν μῦθον ἀπηλεγέως ἀποειπείν,  
 ἢ περ δὴ φρονέω τε, καὶ ὡς τετελεσμένον ἐσται,  
 ὥς μὴ μοι τρυζήτε παρημένος αλλοθεν ἄλλος.—

οὐτ' ἐμὲ γ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα πείσεμεν οἶω,  
 οὐτ' ἄλλους Δαναούς, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀρα τίς χάρις ἦεν,  
 μαρνασθαι δῆϊοισιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσι νῶλεμες αἰεὶ.—

νῦν δ', ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐθέλω πολεμιζέμεν Ἑκτορι δῖω,  
 αὐρίον ἶρα Δῖι ρέξας καὶ πασι θεοῖσι,

νῆησας εὐ, νῆας ἐπὴν ἄλαδ' ἐπροερυσσω,

οὔφραι, ἣν ἐθέλησθα, καὶ αἰκεν τοὶ τὰ μεμῆλη,

ἦρι μάλ' Ἑλλησπόντον ἐπ' ἰχθυοέεντα πλεουσας

νῆας ἐμας, ἐν δ' ἀνδρας ἐρεσσεμέναι μεμαώτας.

εἰ δὲ κεν εὐπλοῖην δῶη κλυτὸς Ἐννοσιγαιος,

ἡματι κε τρίτατ' Ὀφειν ἐριβούλον ἰκοίμην.—

ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν ἰόντες ἀρίστησιν Ἀχαιῶν

ἀγγελίην ἀποφασθε, τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ γέροντων·

οφρ' ἀλλήν φραζώνται ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μήτιν ἀμείνω,

ἢ κε σφὶ νῆας τε σοῆς, καὶ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν

νῆυσιν ἐπὶ γλαφυρῆς· ἐπεὶ οὐ σφίσιν ἤδε γ' ἔτοιμη,

ἦν νῦν ἐφρασσαντο, ἐμεῦ ἀπομνηνισαντος.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Il. ix, 308—311. 315—317. 356—363. 421—426.



CHAP.  
IV.

Ulysses!—hear

A faithful speech, that knows not art, nor fear.

What in my secret soul is understood

My tongue shall utter and my deeds make good.

Let Greece then know my purpose I retain;

Nor with new treaties vex my soul in vain.—

Thus then, in short, my fix'd resolves attend,

Which nor Atrides nor his Greeks can bend.—

*Since I with Hector will contend no more,*

To-morrow we the favouring gods implore;

Then shall ye see our parting vessels crown'd,

And hear with oars the Hellespont resound.

*The third day hence shall Phthia greet our sails,*

If mighty Neptune send propitious gales.—

Go then, to Greece report our fix'd design;

This office fits you; bid your princes join;

*Some MORE EFFECTUAL COUNSEL bid them use;**Since what ye ask, that firmly I refuse!*

In consequence of the entire failure of the embassy, the disasters and perils of the Greeks continue still to increase; the Trojans force their entrenchments, and reach the Grecian navy at its moorings; while Achilles remains an unconcerned, or rather a gratified spectator of the whole.

νηπιος, ουδε τα ηδη α' ρα Ζεϋς μηδετο εργα!



But the divine plan for *ultimately mastering* CHAP.  
*his will*, now begins to unfold itself. He had IV.  
resisted every natural and milder method of  
influence, and *one only* now remains, preter-  
natural and severe, to which his obduracy  
compels Jupiter to resort, and by which it  
will infallibly be overcome; and that, upon  
the very day which he had so recently fixed  
for his own arrival in Thessaly. He had,  
indeed, imprecated this *last method* of influence  
upon himself, in the words with which he  
closed his reply to Ulysses in the embassy;  
for, the counsels and persuasive powers of man  
could go no further, so that the *αλλή ἀμεινων*  
*μητις* — *that other more effectual counsel*, to which  
he scornfully referred them, could only now  
be found in the capacities of divine wisdom  
and power.

Accordingly, Patroclus, whom Achilles had  
hitherto detained in the same inaction with  
himself, is sent by Achilles to ascertain the  
person of a chief, whom, from his ship, he  
had observed to be brought back wounded  
from the battle. That mission, apparently



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spontaneous and fortuitous, becomes, unconsciously to Achilles, the introduction of the fated cause, by which his will was to be finally subdued. On Patroclus answering the call of Achilles, the poet solemnly insinuates the first introduction of that calamitous cause:

ὁ δὲ κλισιῆθεν ακουσας,  
εκμολεν ισος Αρηϊ· κακου δ' αρα οἱ πελεν αρχη.<sup>1</sup>

Graceful as Mars, Patroclus quits his tent

In evil hour! *then fate decreed his doom.*

Upon this last important clause of the poem, Heyne makes no suitable reflection, either in his *annotations*, or his *observations*. Clarke, on the other hand, calls upon his readers to take notice from it, “how closely “connected and articulated all the parts of “the poem are, from the beginning to the “end.”

In executing the order of Achilles, Patroclus repairs to the tent of Nestor, in whose chariot the wounded Machaon had just

<sup>1</sup> Il. xi. 603.



been brought back to the camp. There, he is drawn, by Nestor, into a discourse on the extreme calamities and the impending danger of the confederates; from a particular knowledge of which, his detention with Achilles had hitherto, in a great degree, excluded him. The afflicting representations, and pathetic eloquence of the aged prince, work with such power upon his ingenuous and beneficent nature, that he instantly conceives the noble and gallant determination of exercising all the influence which he is conscious he possesses with his infuriated master, for extorting from him permission to lead his Myrmidons into the field, in aid of his unhappy fellow-countrymen. Thus, as Heyne observes, “affairs are brought to that issue, that Patroclus, moved by commiseration for the Greeks, obtains permission from Achilles, to lead out the forces of the Myrmidons.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Res eo deducitur, ut Patroclus miseratione Achivorum commotus copias Myrmidonum educendas ab Achille impetret. T. viii. p. 801.



CHAP. Secure of his own influence, he dares to  
 IV. upbraid his friend and prince with so much  
 truth, and to press his suit with so much  
 energy and effect, that Achilles, over whom  
 the united supplications of Greece had availed  
 nothing, yields to the solicitations of his  
 personal favourite; though, with manifested  
 reluctance and anxiety, endeavouring, at the  
 same time, to restrain the excess of his intre-  
 pidity and ardour, by prescribing injunctions  
 and limitations. In his reply to the vigorous  
 instances of Patroclus, and under a momentary  
 consciousness of the justness of his reproaches,  
 Achilles endeavours to extenuate the hardness  
 of his heart, by throwing in this palliative  
 sentence:

οὐδ' ἀρα πῶς ἦν

ἀσπερχες κεχολωσθαι ἐνὶ φρεσίν.<sup>1</sup>

The sense of which passage having been  
 materially misapprehended, it will be neces-  
 sary to rectify it. Pope, under that misap-  
 prehension, has rendered it thus:

*'Tis time our fury should relent at last.*

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xvi. 61.



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IV.

From which interpretation of the passage, it would seem, that Achilles already began to feel some risings of compunction; and that his passion was now prepared to check the impetuosity of progress, in which it had hitherto proceeded. Clarke renders it, “*neque enim fas erat perpetuo iratum esse animo;*” and Heyne, “*οὐκ ἐξέστί, οὐ πρέπον. consentaneum non est pertinaciter iram tenere:*” both of them favouring the sense assumed by Pope. But, with all the deference due to such high authorities, I must venture to dissent from their interpretation. They both take *ην*, by itself, in the sense of *ἐξέστί*; and then connect *ἐνὶ φρεσὶ* with *κεχολωσθαι*. But Homer, in no part of his Iliad, so connects those latter words. In one instance, he uses that verb with *θυμῷ*,<sup>1</sup> and once with *κηρ*; but in every other instance, he employs the verb absolutely. The natural import of the sentence conveys a mode of justification or excuse, very common under a sense of deserved reprehension; *οὐ πῶς ἦν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ, ἀσπερχές κεχολωσθαι*—

<sup>1</sup> *θυμός* dat *impetum*, *φρην* vero *consilium*. Damm. Lex. *φρην*.



CHAP. “ neque enim *in animo erat*—*it was not in my*  
 IV. *mind, or, I had no intention, to be perpetually*

“ angry.” And he explains himself by adding,  
 “ *for I myself fixed a period for its termination.*”

But he immediately gives proof, that no change had really taken place in his heart; for his fury increases as his speech proceeds, until, at length, he concludes it with that brutal wish:

That not one Trojan might be left alive,

And not a Greek of all the race survive!

So that the sentence bears no evidence whatever of an incipient diminution of anger towards Agamemnon, but merely of a deference to Patroclus personally; and that, only with transient effect. When, in his reply to Ajax, in the embassy, he pronounced his determination not to act, *until* the Trojans had destroyed the rest of the fleet, and the destruction approached his own ships; he did not, as he would now prevaricate, point out that period on calculation, as the period when *he would again advance to succour the Greeks.*



He meant no more, than that, when all the rest of the Greeks had perished, with their navy, he would then prevent the evil from affecting *himself*, by carrying destruction to Hector, the Trojans, and Troy; he did not design to signify an intention of repelling the evil from *them*, as his barbarous wish, subsequently avowed to Patroclus, conclusively determines.

When Patroclus had departed with the Myrmidons, the uneasy and tumultuous breast of Achilles poured forth this presumptuous prayer :

ΖΕΥ ἀνα, Δωδωναίε, Πελασγίκε, τηλοθι ναίων —  
 τιμήσας μὲν ἔμε, μέγα δ' ἰψάο λαόν Ἀχαιῶν.  
 ἦδ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν μοι τοδ' ἐπικρήνηνον ἐελδῶρ.  
 αὐτὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐγὼ μένεω νηῶν ἐν ἀγῶνι,  
 ἀλλ' ἔταρον πέμπω, πόλεσι μετὰ Μυρμιδόνεσσι —  
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κ' ἀπο ναυφί μαχὴν ἐκώπην τε διηται,  
 ἀσκηθῆς μοι ἐπειτα θοὰς ἐπὶ νηῶς ἰκοίτο,  
 τεύχεσι τε ξύν πασι καὶ ἀγχεμαχοῖς ἔταροισιν.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Il. xvi. 233, 237—240, 247, 248.



## CHAP.

## IV.



O thou supreme! high thron'd all height above!

O great Pelasgic, Dodonæan Jove! —

Hear, as of old! Thou gav'st, at Thetis' prayer,

Glory to me, and to the Greeks despair.

Lo! to the dangers of the fighting field,

The best, the dearest of my friends I yield. —

But when the fleets are saved from foes and fire,

Let him with conquest and renown retire;

*Preserve his arms, preserve his social train,*

*And safe return him to these eyes again!*

The result of that prayer is briefly and awfully foreshown by the poet:

ὥς εἶπετ' εὐχομένης· τοῦ δ' ἐκλυε μητίσται Ζεὺς·

τῷ δ' ἕτερον μὲν ἔδωκε πατήρ, ἕτερον δ' ἀνανεύσει.<sup>1</sup>

Great Jove consents to *half* the chief's request,

But heaven's eternal doom denies *the rest*.

With a similar reservation, Jupiter had assented to his first prayer, or rather, this was the reservation latent in that former mysterious assent; which demonstrates, that the desires of Achilles did not supply the rule of Jupiter's proceeding, as he himself was shortly after

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<sup>1</sup> Ib. 249.



compelled to acknowledge, by the bitterness of his experience : CHAP.  
IV.

αλλ' ου Ζεὺς ἀνδρεσσὶ νοήματα πάντα τελευτᾷ.<sup>1</sup>

But mighty Jove cuts short, with just disdain,  
The long, long views of poor designing man!

The provocation of Patroclus into the scene of conflict, was the last in a series of contrivances, having, for their final end, to compel Achilles into the same scene, *by the action of his own will*. That his will remained hitherto unaltered, is manifest, from the very circumstance of his suffering Patroclus to conduct his forces. Had his resentment given way, in any degree, his heroic ardour would have impelled him to lead them on himself. There would, in that case, have been *no reason* for surrendering the command to Patroclus; for, the only reason which induced Patroclus to solicit it, was, that Achilles *would not* renounce his determination of remaining in *inaction*. His remaining behind, was, therefore, a positive

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xviii. 328.



CHAP. proof, that his feelings continued as yet,  
IV.  
~~~~~ in every respect, the same towards the confederates; and his concession to Patroclus, proved nothing more than the personal ascendancy which that favourite possessed in his heart.

Although the prayers and aspirations of Achilles had no object so much in view as the preservation of the life of Patroclus, yet heaven had irreversibly decreed his death. That death could alone be now effectual, for producing the entire change which the Supreme Master required in the will of Achilles; after all milder means had proved unavailing, and were now exhausted. Accordingly, Patroclus is urged into the heat and fury of the battle by an impulse divinely sent; where he is stricken by an invisible and supernatural hand; is miraculously enfeebled and disarmed; and, in that forlorn and helpless condition, is wounded by Euphorbus, and at length slain by Hector:¹ who, insulting

¹ Il. xvi. 786, &c.

over him in the agony of death, and pronouncing a contemptuous defiance of Achilles, declares his resolution of casting his body to the birds and beasts of prey; and afterwards, strips his dead body of the armour of Achilles, which he appropriates as a trophy to himself.

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IV.

The death of Patroclus is not an ordinary death in battle; it has no parallel in all the catastrophes of the poem, excepting only in the fated death of Hector, to which it is designed to lead. It is presented by the poet as the effect of *a special divine intervention*; ¹ having for its proper and only object, to revive and revigorate *the action of the chief instrument*, who has suspended his own powers to the derangement of the divine plan;

ωρθαι παρὰ ναυφί ποδωκεα Πηλιωνα.²

And it is from henceforth to become the main spring of action, in the sequel of the poem. This, then, is the great *central point*,

¹ Comp. Il. xvi. 688—693.

² Il. viii. 474.

CHAP. or *stage*; after which the whole order of events
 IV. changes its complexion and direction, and
 proceeds again in its original channel.

When the tidings of this heavy calamity are brought to the ears of Achilles, the passion of grief rises instantly within him, in an excess proportionate to the violence of his other passions :

ὥς φάτο· τον δ' αχέος νεφέλη ἐκαλυψε μελαινα·
 ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσιν ἔλων κονὶν αἰθαλοέσσαν,
 χεῦατο κακῇ κεφαλῇ, χάριεν δ' ἤσχυνε πρόσωπον·
 νεκταρεῶ δὲ χιτῶνι μελαίν' ἀμφίζανε τέφρη.
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κονίῃσι μέγας μεγαλωστί τανυσθεὶς
 κείτο, φίλησι δὲ χερσὶ κομὴν ἤσχυνε δαΐζων.¹

A sudden horror shot through all the chief,
 And wrapt his senses in a cloud of grief.
 Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread
 The scorching ashes on his graceful head.
 His purple garments and his golden hairs,
 Those he deforms with dust, and these with tears :
 On the hard soil his groaning breast he threw,
 And roll'd and grovell'd, as to earth he grew.

¹ Il. xviii. 22.

His affliction at once paralyzes all the vigour of his will, by which the resolution of his revenge had been hitherto nourished and sustained. The basis of those resolutions is at once dissolved, and vanishes away; and his resentment towards Agamemnon loses all its being. His heart kindles again with fury; but the object of his fury is changed; it is no longer Agamemnon; and the vehement passion which had suddenly ceased towards that prince, is as suddenly renewed, and directed with equal vehemence, towards Hector:

Atreidas, Priamumque, et sævus ambobus Achilles.

To Thetis, who represents to him, that Jupiter *has now fulfilled all his prayer*;

ΤΑ ΜΕΝ ΔΗ ΤΟΙ ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ

ἐκ Διός, ὥς ἀρα δὴ πρὶν γ' εὐχεο, χεῖρας ἀνασχων.¹

He thus avows the immediate effect of this divine dispensation on his heart, and at the same time, its opposition to the object of his prayer:

¹ Il. xviii. 74.

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IV.



μητερ εμη, ΤΑ μεν αρ μοι Ολυμπιος εξετελεσεν·
 αλλα τι μοι των ηδος, επει φιλος ωλεθ' ἑταιρος,
 Πατροκλος; τον εγω περι παντων τιον ἑταιρων
 ισον εμη κεφαλη·
 ὥς ερις εκ τε θεων, εκ τ' ανθρωπων απολοιτο,
 και χολος, ὅς τ' ἐφεηκε πολυφρονα περ χαλεπηναι,
 ὅς τε, πολυ γλυκιων μελιτος καταλειβομενοιο,
 ανδρων εν στήθεσιν αεξεται, ηὔτε καπνος·
 ὥς εμε νυν εχολωσεν αναξ ανδρων Αγαμεμνων.
 αλλα τα μεν προτετυχθαι εασομεν, αχθυμενοι περ,
 θυμου ενι στήθεσσι φιλον δαμασαντες αναγκη.
 νυν δ' ειμ', οφρα φιλης κεφαλης ολετηρα κιχειω
 Ἕκτορα.¹

He, deeply groaning — “ To this cureless grief,
 Not even *the Thunderer's* favour brings relief.

Patroclus, loved of all my martial train,

Beyond mankind, beyond myself, is slain!—

————— Ye gracious powers above!

Wrath and revenge from gods and men remove!

Far, far too dear to every mortal breast,

Sweet to the soul, as honey to the taste;

Gathering like vapours of a noxious kind

From fiery blood, and dark'ning all the mind.

¹ Il. xviii. 79—82. 107—115.

Me, Agamemnon urged to deadly hate:

'Tis past! I quell it; I resign to fate!

Yes — I WILL MEET *the murderer of my friend!*—

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IV.

Compare, with this last declaration, that which he made to the ambassadors, only “*the third day*” before—*ηματι κε τριτατω;*

— ουκ εθελω πολεμιζεμεν Έκτορι διω·

— I with Hector WILL CONTEND NO MORE.

In the one case, his anger had produced a determined *inaction*; in the other case, it produces an *action* equally determined. He casts off at once from his heart all those affections which had rendered necessary the previous chain of calamities; and which himself had blindly imprecated, heedless of the issue to which they might lead. His will no longer stands in opposition to the purpose of heaven; and, not contented with simply relinquishing his resentment, he publicly and unreservedly renounces it, in conformity to the divine command, in the presence of the same assembly before which he had at first proclaimed, and

CHAP. solemnly vowed it, in this brief, frank, and
 IV. honourable form:

νυν δ' ἤτοι μὲν ΕΓΩ ΠΑΤΩ ΧΟΛΟΝ.¹

Here, then, MY ANGER ENDS!

And here he likewise acquired that *honour*, which Jupiter had ambiguously promised to Thetis; the nature of which we shall examine, when we come to consider the *glory*, which Jupiter eventually superadded to it.

When we reflect upon the foregoing narrative; when we read the furious determinations of his will, and the violent expressions of his passion, the third day before to the ambassadors, and on the preceding day to Patroclus; and discover no diminution or alteration, no gradation whatever towards an exhausture of resentment, but the same ferocious revenge continuing always in the same degree of intensity; we are penetrated with amazement at the free, ingenuous, and unreluctant manner in which this renunciation of

¹ Il. xix. 67.

resentment is thus suddenly made, and at the total change thus instantaneously wrought in *a will*, apparently intractable and inflexible. But, we see before our eyes the *means* by which it is effected; we cannot mistake them; we see, that those means were found in the capacities of supreme wisdom and power; and we are sensible, that the “*nodus*” which Achilles had tied for himself, was in every respect “*dignus Deo vindice*,” and could not have been resolved by an inferior power.

II. Thus, the divine will, in pursuing its own purpose, has prevailed over the human will, although exercising the most powerful energy of its freedom. The order of things is now restored to the channel from which it had been violently diverted; and the sequel of the divine plan proceeds again in the course in which it would have continued to proceed, had no obstruction intervened. Achilles is now rendered as impatient for *action*, as he was just before determined to *inaction*; and he pants to encounter Hector in combat, that he may satiate his revenge for the slaughter

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IV.

CHAP. of Patroclus, by exercising upon the body of

IV.

Hector the same indignities that Hector had proclaimed his intention of exercising upon that of Patroclus; and which we have no reason for supposing that he would not have exercised, had not the Greeks succeeded in rescuing it from his power. By means of the mood thus excited within him, Achilles is wrought up to execute the fate which the divine will had predetermined that he should execute upon Hector, and in the time at first ordained for that catastrophe. He at length finds him, encounters with him, and slays him; and, boiling with vindictive and ferocious exultation, he revels in the thought of retaliating upon him the destiny which he had doomed for Patroclus, by depriving him of the consolation and honour of sepulture.

But, that part of the divine plan being now accomplished, which had preordained *the fall of Hector by his hand*, the completion of that plan remained still to be effected; namely, that Achilles should relinquish his ferocious purpose of exposing his body to be

torn and devoured, and should cooperate, *with* CHAP.
his own will, in affording an honourable inter- IV.
ment to his remains. 

Here then, a new *nodus* occurs, equally intricate with the former, and incapable of solution by a less power than that which had disentangled the former. The will of Achilles is now as resolutely fixed, *to refuse burial* to the body of Hector, as it had been before, *to refuse succour* to the Greeks. A new conquest of his will remained therefore to be effected, before the divine will might accomplish its final article. In the purpose of *his own will*, his determination is immoveably fixed to refuse the body, which he held in his possession, whatever price might be proffered for its ransom; even though Priam and all his house should come as supplicants to sue for it. He is equally determined, that it shall undergo the fate for which he was reserving it; and in evidence of the violence of that determination, he avows an infuriate regret, that he cannot participate with the dogs and vultures in the sanguinary feast:

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αι γαρ πως αυτον με μενος και θυμος ανηη

ωμ' αποταμνομενον κρεα εδμεναι.¹

Could I, myself, the bloody banquet join !

by which sentiment, the poet has skilfully painted the intensity and extremity of his vengeance.

Nevertheless, he is shortly to relinquish all those determinations and all that vengeance, with the same promptness and pliancy, and with as little reluctance and reservation, as when he renounced his enmity to Agamemnon. He is to accept a ransom; he is to accept that ransom from the hand of Priam, and of Priam only; he is to surrender the body of Hector, and to surrender it courteously and kindly; and he is moreover to offer, spontaneously, every facility for the undisturbed and complete performance of the sepulchral rite. That is, he is to act in every particular, and with the concurrence of his own will, by a rule directly opposite to that

¹ Il. xxii. 346.

which his own will had so fixedly prescribed for itself. Let us observe, how this *second* frustration of his purpose, this *second* subjugation of his will is brought to pass; and how *the unity* of the original divine purpose is brought to its perfect termination.

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Previous to the last act of vengeance which he is meditating, he proceeds to celebrate the funeral rite of his departed favourite. His great adversary is now no more; and a large measure of his vengeance is expended, in slaying the slayer of that favourite, and in dragging his lifeless body in the dust, in the view of Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache, and all the assembled population of Troy. The affectionate office in which he is about to engage, engrosses for the time all his thoughts and all his feelings. On returning to the body of Patroclus, the tenderness of grief revives; and, succeeding to the excitement of fury, regains its ascendancy in his heart. The preparations and arrangements for rendering the most ample honours to the memory of the dead, next

CHAP. possess his concern. At length, the funeral
IV.  rite is performed, and upon a scale of extraordinary magnificence; his utmost wishes are attained in its execution; and his vindictive passions receive a copious measure of satisfaction, from the immolation of twelve noble Trojans upon the funeral pile. The games which succeed, are undertaken by the most illustrious of the Grecian princes. His feelings are gradually soothed by the consciousness of having thus splendidly discharged the last offices of friendship; and the noble and gracious deportment of Agamemnon in the last scene of the games, contrasting with the remembrance of their late unhappy difference, is well calculated to affect deeply his warm and generous nature, and completes his gratification.

When therefore he returns to contemplate the last fruitless object of his revenge, his heart has undergone a preparatory course of softening, of which he himself is altogether unconscious; but which is in the knowledge, as it is in the plan, of the su-

preme will. All that is now requisite for CHAP.
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inducing him to relinquish his brutal design, is *a direct and express notification*, that such is the pleasure of *that will*: a notification, which he might have rejected in an earlier stage of his excitement; but which, having been thus gradually prepared, he is now become fitted to receive with due submission. Accordingly, at that chosen moment, Jupiter directs Thetis to convey to Achilles the precept of his will:

ἐγὼ τοῦδε κῦδος Ἀχιλλῆϊ προτίαπτω,

αἰδῶ καὶ φιλοτῆτα τῆν μετοπίσθε φυλάσσων·

αἰψά μάλ' ἐς στρατὸν ἐλθε, καὶ υἱεῖ σὺ ἐπιτείλον·

σκυζέσθαι οἱ εἶπε θεοὺς, ἐμὲ δ' ἐξοχα πάντων

ἀθανάτων κεχολώσθαι, ὅτι φρεσὶ μαινομένησιν

Ἑκτορ' ἐχει παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν, οὐδ' ἀπελυσεν·

αἰ κεν πῶς ἐμὲ τε δεισῇ, ἀπο θ' Ἑκτορα λυσῇ.¹

I will, thy son himself the corpse restore;

And, to his glory, ADD THIS GLORY more.

¹ Il. xxiv. 110.

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Then hie thee to him, and our mandate bear ;
 Tell him, he tempts the wrath of heaven too far :
 Nor let him more, *our anger if he dread,*
 Vent his mad vengeance on the sacred dead ;
 But yield to ransom, and the father's prayer !

This precept, Thetis conveys in the same terms in which she receives it from Jupiter ; enforcing it, at its conclusion, with her own maternal injunction :

αλλ' αγε δη λυσον, νεκροιο δε δεξαι αποινα·

Accept the ransom, and restore the slain !

And what is the conduct of Achilles on receiving this command ? No sooner is it pronounced, than it is obeyed ; without reluctance, evasion, or a moment's hesitation, he professes his submission, and relinquishes his own determinations upon this occasion, as he had done upon the former, in the shortest form and in the fewest words :

τηδ' ειη, ος αποινα φεροι, και νεκρον αγοιτο,

ει δη προφρονι θυμω Ολυμπιος αυτος ανωγει.¹

¹ Il. xxiv. 139.

Be the ransom given,
And I submit; *since such the will of heaven!*

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IV.

Or more literally thus:

Come one, to bring the price, and *take the slain*;
If thus indeed Jove's sovereign will ordain!

In this sentiment of submission in Achilles, and in the action of his practical obedience which immediately followed, consisted the *κῦδος*, or *glory*, which Jupiter *superadded* to the *τιμή*, *honour*, that he had before provided for him; and to which it serves to give the fullest illustration. For so we must understand the line,

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοδὲ κῦδος Ἀχιλλῆϊ προτιᾶπτω·

And to his glory, *ADD this glory more.*

Pope has correctly caught its design; for, the *honour*, which Jupiter contrived for Achilles in the former division of the poem, demands the sense of *addition* in the verb *προτιᾶπτω*, in this latter part. Sophocles uses the word *προσαπτω*, in that same sense;¹ and though,

¹ κακὰ προσαψὲι τοῖς παλαί. Œd. Tyr. 668.

μη τί ἐμα πολεὶ προσαψῆς. Œd. Col. 236. Burton. 228.

CHAP. where he says, *προσάπτω σοι τιμας*, it is rendered
 IV. by the translator simply, *te honoro*; yet, as the
 phrase is addressed to a personage honoured
 before, it conveys a relative notion, of *addi-
 tion* to preceding honours. As in latin, we
 have, *addere, cumulare, accumulare honores*.
 Thus Cicero says — “Africanus eloquentia *cu-
 mulavit* bellicam gloriam.”¹ This passage
 therefore reveals the mind of Jupiter, and
 therein of Homer.

The former *honour*, had not been measured
 by the vulgar and fallacious rule of human
 passion or opinion; but, by the sublime and
 unerring rule of divine judgment. It was not,
 the mere reducing an adversary to the humili-
 ation of acknowledging superiority in his
 rival; for, nothing of the kind is to be found
 in this latter *glory*; and yet, whatever it was
 on this second occasion, the same it was on
 the first, to which it was added as *a second
 of the same kind*. Here was no humiliation,
 but, on the contrary, the consolation of an

¹ De Off. i. 32.

enemy. Here was no exorbitant tribute, CHAP.
arbitrarily extorted; but merely a price, pro-
portioned to the ransom of the princely body. IV.

Heyne therefore took a very erroneous, and far too low, an estimate of the glory in question; when he interpreted Jupiter's speech to intend nothing more, than — “*This honour I prepare*”
“*for him, that he shall restore the body*”
“*for a ransom.*”¹ And again — “*Jupiter in-*”
“*geniously contrives for the honour of Thetis,*”
“*that her son should glory, in receiving a great*”
“*price of ransom.*”² For, Achilles had it always in his option; to choose, and to demand, a great price of ransom. It had been tendered to him by Hector himself, in his dying words; and he had rejected it with disdain and contumely. He preferred the possession of the body, to any ransom that could be offered; what increase of honour, then, could

¹ *Hunc honorem ei paro, tribuo:* scil. ut ille cum redemptionis pretio corpus reddat. T. ii. p. 617. not.

² Illud ingeniose est inventum, quod Jupiter hoc ipsum in Thetidis honorem machinatur, ut filius pretio magno redemptionis accepto, superbiat. Arg. H. xxiv. T. ii. p. 608.

CHAP. he derive, merely from *the value of a price*,
IV.  which he deemed infinitely *inferior* to that of the prize of which he held the possession? Had the greatness of the ransom been the glory designed for him, Jupiter's concern would have been directed to persuade Priam *to give*; whereas, it was directed to persuade Achilles *to receive*. In receiving the ransom, therefore, Achilles conceded to Priam; and the only glory which he could derive from thence, must have resulted from the concession itself; that is, from the submission of his own will, and the renunciation of his vindictive resolutions. His *exultation in the vastness of the ransom*, which Heyne gratuitously introduces, is a mere fiction; as foreign to the story of the poem, as it is poor and low in the conception.

Heyne seems to have failed in this interpretation, from not having compared and combined the *glory*, on this latter occasion, with the *honour*, on the former. On that former occasion, the honour of Achilles did not consist in the concessions made to him by Agamemnon and the Greeks, as his distempered imagination

had anticipated; for, those concessions were fully made to him in the negotiation of the embassy; but so far was he from deriving any honour from that transaction, that he only rendered more inglorious the state to which his obduracy and obstinacy had reduced him, in the midst of those concessions. How far he was from acquiring any honour from that circumstance, is plainly shown by the report which the ambassadors made of their mission, after their return; and, by the reproachful reflections of Diomedes thereupon, at the conclusion of the same book.¹ It is further demonstrated, in the subsequent observations of Neptune to Agamemnon in the fourteenth book.

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Ατρείδῃ, νυν δὲ πού Ἀχιλλεύς ολοὺν κήρ
γῆθει ἐνὶ στήθεσσι, φόνον καὶ φυζάν Ἀχαιῶν
δερχομένῳ· ἐπεὶ οὐ οἱ ἐνὶ φρενέσσι οὐδ' ἠβαιαί·
ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ὥς ἀπολοῖτο, θεὸς δὲ ἔσιφλωσσει.²

Atrides, lo! with what disdainful eye

Achilles sees his country's forces fly:

¹ Il. ix. L. 693—9. ² L. 139.

CHAP.

IV.



Blind, impious man! whose anger is his guide,

Who glories in unutterable pride.

So may he perish! so may Jove disclaim

The wretch relentless, and o'erwhelm with shame!

These lines do not describe a man, who had attained to honour among those from whom he sought it. His *honour* then only commenced, when, slighting the recital of the proffered gifts, and disclaiming his revenge, he made those concessions to Agamemnon, in the nineteenth book, which produced a virtuous struggle between the two chiefs, which should concede the most; and when the consequent acclamations of the army, which Agamemnon deemed it necessary to restrain, testified the general feeling of admiration and joy.¹ It was the same on the latter occasion; his *added glory* arose, when he submitted his will to the command of Jupiter, and when he resigned his vengeance to the paternal supplications of Priam. In these two notable acts of concession, consisted all the honour and all the glory which the

¹ L. 74. Comp. Il. ix. 301 — 3.

wise and gracious dispensation of Jupiter contrived to bring upon Achilles; by empowering him to overcome the dictates and impulse of his own criminal will. And who, that takes a just view of that which constitutes true honour and true glory, either in themselves, or in the mind of the great author of the Iliad and Odyssey, can read these two parallel examples; of a nature, constituted like that of Achilles, divesting itself at once, and without a moment's hesitation, of its most darling passion, on awakening to the first intimate and heartfelt impression of imperious and sacred duty; without viewing the hero exalted thereby to an elevation of dignity, infinitely transcending any, to which the proudest success of malignity and revenge, or the lowest humiliation of a personal enemy, could possibly have raised him?

Latius regnes, *rabidum* domando
 Spiritum, quam si Libyam remotis
 Gadibus jungas; et uterque Pænus
 Serviat uni!¹

¹ Hor. Od. ii. 2, 9.

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IV.



Wider the empire thou shalt gain,

Subduing a rebellious mind;

'Than if all Libya and Spain,

Beneath thy sceptre were combin'd!

To no character or incident in all the Iliad does Horace's description of the nature of Homer's instruction so immediately point, as to the contrasted characters of Achilles; when he adheres to, and when he relinquishes, the resolutions of his own distempered will:

Qui quid sit *pulcrum*, quid *turpe*, quid *utile*, quid *non*,

Plenius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.¹

Whose works, the beautiful and base contain:

Of vice and virtue, more instructive rules,

Than Crantor's and Chrysippus's in the schools.

For Chrysippus, as we are told by Epictetus,² was a teacher, whose instructions were notable for the obscurity of the language in which they were conveyed; whereas, Homer's instructions in these particulars are so lucid and plain, that (to borrow a sacred phrase quoted to satiety,) "he who runs may read." The

¹ Id. Ep. L. i. 2, 3. ² Enchirid. c. 73.

great sum of his instruction, drawn from those two occasions, is this; that no point or sense of honour, no pledge of friendship, no solemnity of oath, can bind to the fulfilment of engagements in themselves criminal, or proceeding from a criminal intention; that adherence to such honour, is most dishonourable, and abidance by such oath, most impious. That nothing is more odious, than obstinate tenacity to error; nothing more admirable, than prompt, fearless, and unhesitating abandonment of it.

It was thus, then, that Achilles consented to receive a ransom for the body of Hector; and he received it, from the hand of Priam. He consented to restore the body; and he restored it to the aged Priam himself, with feelings of commiseration, tenderness, and even filial veneration. He spontaneously tendered his pledge, that the Greeks should cause no interruption to the funeral rite by which it was to be honoured. And he moreover conceded to Priam, an unlimited power, of fixing the period of inaction requisite for the perfect celebration of the rite. And thus,

CHAP.

IV.

CHAP. the full purpose of heaven, in the memorable
 IV. *preliminary to the downfall of Troy*, was completed to its final article; through the instrumental agency of Achilles.

From that great hour the war's whole fortune turns;

Pallas assists, and lofty Ilion burns.

But, the destruction of Troy is an event entirely distinct from, and lying beyond the limits of, that preliminary action; which alone constitutes the poem of the Iliad. Having, therefore, established and recorded the full and final accomplishment of the divine will in that action; the poet, who, in the preceding book, had warned his auditors of the frustration of Achilles's ferocious threat to the body of Hector, in those words;

ὥς φάτ' ἀπειλησας, τὸν δ' οὐ κυνὲς ἀμφεπενοντο.¹

Thus spake he threat'ning, *but no dogs devoured* :

concludes with an emphatic reference to that previous warning, in this line;

¹ Comp. ἀμφιπενομαι, Il. xxiii. 182, 4. ἀμφιπενω. Ib. 159. and Od. xx. 307. and ἀμφιπρω. Il. xxiv. 804.

ὥς Οἱ γ' ἀμφιεπον ταφον Ἑκτορος ἵπποδαμοιο.

CHAP.
IV.

i. e. ὥς Οἱ ἀμφιεπον ταφον Ἑκτορος ου ΚΥΝΕΣ ἀμφεπε-
νοντο, ὥς εφ'ατο Αχιλλεὺς ἀπειλησας.

Unxere matres Iliæ addictum feris

Alitibus atque canibus homicidam Hectorem.¹

Thus THEY, (i. e. *not dogs*,) Hector's last rite performed!

thereby triumphantly confirming the truth of the great proposition, with which the poem had opened, ΔΙΟΣ ΤΕΛΕΙΕΤΟ ΒΟΥΛΗ!

Such is the import, and such the force, of that concluding line; which, nevertheless, through a neglect of its proper reference, and a misapprehension of the governing argument of the whole, has been frequently censured as flat, lifeless, unworthy to conclude so magnificent a poem, and, therefore, a spurious adjunct of some meddling and tasteless interpolator: with what justice, I leave to the reader to decide.

¹ Hor. Epod. xvii. 11.

CHAP. From the same causes, Heyne dismisses it
 IV. with this spare and frigid remark: “ *ex usu*
 “ *Homerico esse debebat,*”

ὥς οἱ γ' ἀμφὶ ταφὸν ἐπον¹

But I anticipate, that the reader will not confirm this “ *esse debebat.*” For, Homer has *no where* so employed the word ἀμφιέπον, in either of his poems. He has used it with *tnesis*, only three times; once in the *Iliad*, and twice in the *Odyssey*;² but it has been merely to insert the conjunction τε—ἀμφι θ' ἐπον: and in all these cases, he has made the last syllable of the verb the beginning of a foot. Heyne's proposed emendation, in altering the rhythm, produces a cacophony, of which the ear is too sensible to tolerate its ascription to Homer. For which reasons, I shall venture to vindicate the genuineness of this important concluding line, against the temerarious judgment of the

¹ Il. Tom. viii. p. 758.

² Il. vii. 316. Od. viii. 61. xix. 421.

learned German ; and upon the identical ground upon which he would pronounce its repudiation, namely, “ *ex usu Homérico.*”

CHAP.

IV.

From the foregoing survey of the poem, we further perceive, how unfounded and uncritical is the observation of Menecrates upon this line, reported in the *scholia* of Villoison ;¹ “ that Homer, feeling himself fail in his “ poetical vigour, and sensible that he was “ become unequal to *continue his poem* with “ the same success, omitted all the events “ of the war *which followed the sepulture of “ Hector.*” For we have seen, that Homer concludes with *the sepulture* for no other reason ; than because it constitutes the true and perfect *end* of the particular action, which his poem was designed to commemorate.

¹ Μενεχράτης φησιν, αισθομενον ἑαυτου ασθενιας τον ποιητην, και του μη ὁμοιωσ δυνασθαι φραζειν, εασαι τα μεθ’ Ἑκτορα. Schol. ult.

CHAP.
IV.TIME EMPLOYED IN THE MAIN ACTION OF THE ILIAD. ¹

Twelve days after the quarrel of the princes and the secession of Achilles, Thetis petitions Jupiter with respect to the sequel of the war. Jupiter returns *a covered and ambiguous answer*, which Thetis sanguinely interprets as a full and entire assent to her prayer. At the same time, he gives *a distinct and unreserved promise* to JUNO, that she shall be informed, before every other deity, of the measures which he intends to adopt in consequence of the actual circumstances of the war, so soon as it shall be fitting for him to divulge them. During *that night*, he sends a delusive dream to Agamemnon, to engage him to prepare his army for the conflict on *the following day*; on which day, active operations recommence. B. i. and *beginning of ii.*

FIRST DAY.

The adverse armies meet. A truce is agreed upon, for the single combat of Menelaus and Paris. The truce is treacherously broken on the part of the Trojans; and a general battle ensues, with great slaughter and splendid achievements on both sides.—B. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. *and part vii.*

SECOND DAY.

In consequence of an herald sent from Troy, a second truce is agreed upon; for burying the slain. Both armies are

¹ Conf. Heyne. tom. vii. p. 573—577.

employed in felling and bringing wood for the funeral piles; and in separating, collecting, and washing their respective dead. — B. vii. CHAP.
IV.

THIRD DAY.

The bodies are burned. During the night, the Greeks raise a general mound over the ashes of their countrymen; in front of which, they construct a wall or entrenchment for the defence of their fleet. — B. vii.

FOURTH DAY.

The battle is renewed. Achilles and Patroclus remain apart in their ships. The Greeks are repulsed, and driven by the Trojans within their new entrenchments. Jupiter fulfils, *in part*, his promise to Juno, who is distressed at the disasters of the Greeks; by informing her, *that he shall permit the repulse of the Greeks only until Patroclus shall be called forth into the combat and slain; which event shall restore Achilles to action, and provoke him to renew his exploits in the field.* The Greeks hold a council at night, and send a conciliatory and supplicatory embassy to Achilles, which fails of effect. Achilles confirms his resolution of assisting them no more; declares his determination, of *fighting no more against Hector*; and signifies his purpose, of arriving in Thessaly *on the third day from that interview.* — B. viii. ix. x.

FIFTH DAY.

The battle is renewed. The Trojans force the entrenchments of the Greeks, and assail their ships. Jupiter lays open to Juno *the whole* of his plan, viz. *that, after*

CHAP. *Patroclus shall have been slain by Hector, Achilles shall be*
 IV. *again roused to action; that he shall then encounter Hector, and*
shall slay him; after whose death, there shall be no further
delay to the destruction of Troy. Patroclus, moved by
 the calamities of the confederates, extorts from Achilles
 permission to lead the Myrmidons against the enemy. He is
 slain, and treated with ferocity and insult by Hector. —
 B. xi. xii. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi. xvii. xviii.

SIXTH DAY.

Achilles, on hearing of the slaughter of Patroclus, and
 of the ferocious deportment of Hector towards him, dis-
 charges from his heart all his resentment towards Agamem-
 non; and directs the whole measure of his fury against
 Hector, to the disappointment and affliction of his mother
 Thetis. By the impulse of that fury, he hastens to the
 field; he seeks for Hector, finds him alone, engages with
 him, and kills him; on *the very day*¹ which he had fixed,
 in his own purpose, for his arrival in Thessaly. And he
 proclaims his resolution of casting the body of Hector to be
 devoured; in retaliation of the threat, which Hector had
 pronounced to Patroclus. — B. xix. xx. xxi. xxii.

After the death of Hector, *two days* are consumed in
 celebrating the funeral rite, and funeral games, of Patroclus.

¹ ηματι τεταται — For this inclusive method of computation among the
 Greeks, see Pearson *on the Creed*. Art. v. note.

CHAP.
IV.

During the *ten* following days, the body of Hector remains in the possession of Achilles subjected to daily insult; but not yet exposed to the final laceration which he had threatened, and which he is meditating. On that *tenth day*, *Jupiter transmits his commands to Achilles by Thetis, to restore the body*; and to Priam by Iris, to proceed to the Grecian camp to receive it. Both the commands are *that night* obeyed. Achilles orders the body to be duly washed and dressed, and consigns it to Priam: he engages, that the Trojans shall experience no interruption from the Greeks in the performance of the funeral obsequies, during the *twelve days* which Priam had required, and which he had granted: and thus, upon the *twelfth of those days*, the funeral of Hector is completed, in all the perfection of sepulchral honour. — B. xxiii. xxiv. *The whole time, therefore, from the commencement of the feud to the burial of Hector, is forty-two days.*

CHAPTER V.

OF THE PRIMARY ARGUMENT OF THE ILIAD, DEDUCED FROM
THE PRECEDING REVIEW.

CHAP. ^{V.} IN taking thus a comprehensive view of the entire Iliad, we plainly perceive, that the Poem distributes itself into two principal parts or divisions; of which, the former division is distinguished by *the inaction* of Achilles, and the effects of that inaction; and the latter, by *the action* of Achilles, and the effects of that action; and that they unite in an intermediate point of articulation, in which the former division finds its termination, and the latter division its commencement.

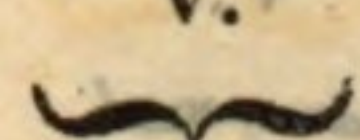
We find, that in each of those parts the determination of *the will of Achilles* is strongly declared, yet in both parts he acts in direct opposition to the determination of his own will; while, at the same time, he acts in exact conformity to the contrary declared *will of Jupiter*.

We find, that in both cases, that conformity is produced through the intervention of the supreme power of Jupiter, and by the means employed by him *for that end*; that his power is directed in the first division of the poem, to restore the inaction of Achilles to action; and, in the second division, to cause that action to accomplish the particular purpose for which it was restored; so that the end ultimately attained by the action, was the same for which the inaction was originally to be overcome.

We find, therefore, that *the will of Jupiter* prescribes the rule of the action of Achilles, and is *the efficient agency* of the main action of the poem; and that *the will of Achilles* is totally subordinate to that supreme will, and is rendered its chief *instrumental agent* in accomplishing that main action. For, Achilles is made *to act* — and to act *by the rule of that will* — when he had most resolutely determined *not to act*; and *to do*, in substance and circumstance — *by the same rule* — what he had with equal resolution determined *not to do*.

CHAP.

V.



It is not difficult, therefore, now to perceive; that THE PRIMARY AND GOVERNING ARGUMENT OF THE ILIAD, co-extensive with its extent, running through all its length and reaching to its extreme termination, is — *the sure and irresistible power of the divine will, over the most resolute and determined will of man — exemplified in the death and burial of Hector, by the instrumentality of Achilles — as the immediate preliminary to the destruction of Troy.*

It is this eminent office of Achilles in the Iliad, that supplies the true cause of the phenomenon which Clarke has repeatedly pointed out for observation, but to which he has assigned no cause: “It ought to be remarked,” says he, “with what great artifice (in order that the poem may be *one*, from its beginning to its end), Achilles is seen, or mentioned, in every event that is related, and in every speech that is spoken.”¹

¹ Notandum, quanto cum artificio, (ut *poëma unum* sit a capite ad calcem), quicquid rerum narretur, quisquis hominum loquatur, *nusquam non spectetur et inseratur Achilles.*

Not. ad Il. xiii. 324. conf. nott. ad Il. ii. 673. v. 788. vii. 228.

He makes the same remark, and almost in the same words, four several times. CHAP.
V.
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This great governing argument is so plain and obvious, and lies so superficially exposed upon the poem, that nothing can have prevented the attention of learned critics from recognising it, but the vast accumulations of multifarious learning with which their views have been crowded and encumbered. It required, especially in these times of minute criticism, a mind *levis armaturæ*; unfurnished with so massive and various a panoply of critical warfare, and therefore better equipped for a speedy movement; to take a rapid and general survey of the whole subject. Such must have been the manner, in which the poem unfolded its great argument to its first auditors; who listened to its narrative with a continuous attention rivetted upon the tale, and uninterrupted by any distractions of curious research; much less, of that meteoric subtilty, which Wolfe entitles the *altior critice*. But our learned critics, could never descend to use Homer so popularly and so unlearnedly.



CHAP. V. Their attention to the story, was therefore arrested, or called aside, at every step they took, by the innumerable interests which they met with on the way ; which so impeded and retarded their progress, that they lost every opportunity of grasping an entire view of the whole. In this they unfortunately copied the example of the Alexandrian critics ; and this is the true cause of the fact remarked by Heyne, that “ after the days of Aristotle, “ many, and especially the more modern, no “ longer trod in his footsteps.”<sup>1</sup> The delay, thus occasioned, caused them to dwell so long upon subordinate arguments ; “ which,” as Aristotle has observed, “ have each their “ own separate magnitude ;”<sup>2</sup> that some of the chief of these increased in importance to their view, until at length they usurped the place of that which was really the primary

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<sup>1</sup> Post Aristotelem, multos, et multo magis recentiores, *in ejus vestigiis non substitisse.* Hom. T. viii. p. 800.

<sup>2</sup> ὥσπερ ἡ Ἰλιάς ἔχει πολλὰ τοιαῦτα μέρη, καὶ ἡ Ὀδυσσεΐα, ἃ καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἔχει μέγεθος. Poet. c. ult. in fine.



argument. Such are, *the anger of Achilles*, CHAP.  
and *the prayer of Thetis*. V.

Whereas, to seize that argument, it required that the mind should be entirely free to impress itself with the continued story; and to contemplate its progress, without any consideration bestowed upon the harvest of philological, prosodiæcal, mythological, and critical produce, which crowded the path. It was necessary,

κηρον δεψησας μελιηδεα, μη τις ακουση,<sup>1</sup>

Kneading the honied wax, that none might hear,  
to close the ears firmly and resolutely against  
all the syrens of luxuriant criticism ;

ἅι ρα τε παντας

ανθρωπους θελγουσιν, ὁ, τις σφεας εισαφικηται.<sup>2</sup>

Who *all* seduce, that to their haunts approach ;  
and to pursue the direct navigation of the  
poem, attentive only to the winds and currents which govern its course.

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<sup>1</sup> Od. xii. 48. <sup>2</sup> L. 39.



CHAP.

V.

In this state of the mind, and deriving this peculiar species of advantage from an inferiority of minute erudition, a freedom is acquired for glancing rapidly through the whole of the Iliad; and we are able to view it, at once, in all its parts and symmetry, and in the integrity of its corporate unity. Heyne indeed proposed a similar exercise of abstraction, but then it was for the very opposite purpose: “the whole poem,” he says, “ought to be read with the mind abstracted from *all other considerations*, and intent only upon *this one point*; namely, to endeavour to ascertain whether one perpetual principle can be collected from the poem:”<sup>1</sup> But, what was the object of this abstraction, what was this one principle, in the pursuit of which every thing else in the poem was to be put out of view? It was, the restoration of *the primitive*

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<sup>1</sup> Legendum est totum carmen, animo ab *omnibus aliis* avvocato, et in *unam hanc rem* intento, ut intelligat, an certa aliqua ac perpetua per totum carmen ratio inferri possit—*sc.* in dialecto Homerica restituenda. Hom. T. viii. p. 228.



*dialect of Homer's language*: a learned, interesting, and important object, without dispute; but it is hardly possible that a mind long exercised and practised to this object and mode of abstraction, should be equally successful in directing itself to the other. For, those processes are directly opposite to each other; the one must be effected by a resolute *contraction* of the view, the other, by as resolute an effort of *expansion*; the habits of which, cannot fail to be mutually inimical to each other.

In the foregoing survey of the narrative, I have purposely abstained from adverting to any part of its rich and attractive detail; because it was my peculiar object to show, that without regarding any secondary circumstance whatsoever, either of incident or person, contained within it, the Iliad possesses a *one, external, covering, and universal argument*; in itself one of the most sublime and perfect that the human mind is capable of conceiving, and which constitutes the only connected story in the poem; of the *main action* of which,



CHAP. JUPITER is the *chief agent*; ACHILLES the *chief*  
 V. *instrument*; and HECTOR the *chief object*. An  
 argument, which overrules and absorbs every  
 other, even those that have hitherto been as-  
 sumed for the primary argument; which is the  
 master-key, that opens all its wards; and by  
 the aid of which alone we detect the order  
 of its structure, and the due relation of the  
 parts of its machinery. This alone is *substance*;  
 every thing else is *circumstance*.

This primary argument, constitutes *one*  
*simple action*—πραξις μια και απλους: a single  
 action of the supreme efficient agent; pre-  
 pared in the beginning of the poem, and com-  
 pleted only in its termination. For, that  
 which constitutes its *final object*, was dis-  
 closed by Jupiter to Juno in *the middle* of  
 the poem; and what he then disclosed, was  
 the same that he refused to disclose at the  
*beginning*. Thus, the main action is *one*,  
 though its end is attained by the subser-  
 viency and concurrence of various subordinate  
 agencies.

Again, the primary argument is strictly



ὅλον — *an entire and perfect whole*; having a CHAP.  
V.  
true *beginning, middle, and end*, and answering   
exactly to the definitions of these given by  
Aristotle. So that the story composing the  
Iliad forms in itself, if I may so speak, a  
complete episode in the general history of  
the Trojan war; from which it was admirably  
selected by Homer, as furnishing the matter  
for constituting a perfect epic poem.

I. It has a true and proper *beginning* —  
*αρχη*; namely, “*that which is not a necessary*  
“*consequence of any thing that preceded, but*  
“*which necessarily gives rise to effects which*  
*ensue.*” For, the feud that suddenly broke out  
between Achilles and Agamemnon, was not a  
necessary consequence of the occasion out of  
which it issued; namely, the notification of the  
cause, and remedy, of the pestilence. The re-  
gular and natural consequence of that notifi-  
cation would have been, a compliance with  
the divine requisition, on the part of Agamem-  
non; and, if that had followed, there would  
have been no interruption or alteration in  
the course of things which was then pro-



CHAP. ceeding. But, the freedom of the human  
V. will in the two princes, gave sudden and unforeseen birth to *a new cause*, which necessarily drew after it an extensive train of consequences; and this is precisely what Aristotle intends by *a beginning*. Simultaneously with this new cause arising in the human agents, a new cause was put into operation by the supreme controller of those agents; in order to counteract the resisting action of the human cause, and to secure the accomplishment of his own original purpose. That purpose continued unchangeably the same; but he was now constrained to introduce a new process for effecting it.

II. That purpose, or *final end*, was the perfecting the action, which he had from the first determined should be effected by the instrumentality of Achilles, previously to the overthrow of Troy; namely, the removal of Hector from the scene of life, and with the circumstances requisite for marking him to be an object of the divine favour. As soon as that action was perfectly completed, by Achilles



concurring and co-operating to secure the performance of the funeral rite of Hector, that great *preliminary measure* was likewise completed. With this last article, Homer concludes his poem, of which it forms the proper *τελος, τελευτη*, or *end*; namely, “*that which followed, necessarily, or ordinarily, from that which preceded, but which is followed, by nothing else;*” because it is the last in a series of particulars.

But some learned critics have authoritatively affirmed, that *the funeral* of Hector is superfluous and luxuriant, and exceeds the proper ending of the poem; which cannot, legitimately, extend beyond his *death*. Hence, Heyne regards the funerals both of Patroclus and Hector as an unskilful overcharge of the poem; and upon that account pronounces the two last books to be *alienæ*<sup>1</sup> — *spurious*, without any hesitation. And Wolfe confidently asks; as if his question could not meet with a satisfactory answer; “If the Iliad had ended

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<sup>1</sup> Tom. viii. p. 781.



CHAP. V. “when Achilles has revenged upon Hector  
 “the slaughter of Patroclus, who would have  
 “dared to censure Homer; or would have  
 “complained, that he has not performed all  
 “that he had promised? *Who would think,*  
 “*that the Iliad did not end as well as the*  
 “*Æneid?*”<sup>1</sup> Secure as he shows himself in  
 putting this question, yet the answer is ob-  
 vious and easy; and is two-fold, either as it  
 is made a question of taste and feeling, or a  
 question of rule and art. I shall here con-  
 sider the former question; reserving the con-  
 sideration of the latter to its proper occasion.  
 Wolfe, indeed, suggests the answer himself,  
 as to the question of feeling; in the compa-  
 rison which he makes, between the endings  
 of the Iliad and the Odyssey. “They do  
 “not show by their *rules*,” says he, “*why* the  
 “Iliad should end with the tumultuary de-  
 “scription of *the funeral of Hector*; for, as to  
 “the Odyssey, they distinctly show the pro-  
 “priety of its ending; in this, *every man’s*

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<sup>1</sup> Pref. ad Hom.



“common sense teaches him, that if the con- CHAP.  
 “cluding part was wanting, we should be <sup>V.</sup>  
 “left in anxiety concerning Ulysses, unless  
 “an amnesty and peace had been established,  
 “by the intervention and sudden contriv-  
 “ance of the gods.”<sup>1</sup> The question therefore  
 is — *Why would not the Iliad conclude as well  
 with the death of Hector, as the Æneid with  
 the death of Turnus, which is followed by no  
 mention of his funeral?*

To answer this question, I reply; that the  
 two cases are not parallel, and therefore,  
 that they will not bear the comparison which  
 Wolfe institutes. Let us prove it by his own  
 principle of common sense or feeling, which

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<sup>1</sup> De *Iliade* non demonstrant ex regulis suis, cur ea  
 potissimum in tumultuaria descriptione *Hectorei funeris*  
 terminetur. Nam de *Odyssea*, quod volunt, plane efficiunt.  
 In hac *suus quemque sensus* docet; si extrema illa deessent,  
*sollicitos nos abituros esse de Ulysse*, tantarum difficulta-  
 tum victore, quandoquidem ei tum maxime metueremus  
 a parentibus et cognatis cæsorum 108 notabilium juvenum,  
 nisi amnestia et pax fieret, deorum interventu et subita  
*μηχανη*. Proleg. ad Hom. p. 136.



CHAP. he applies to prove the excellence of the ending  
<sup>v.</sup>  
of the Odyssey. The same common sense will lead us to a similar conclusion, with respect to the ending of the Iliad with the 24th book. With regard to Turnus, we are left in no anxiety when we close the Æneid. For, although it is impossible to have known the sentiments transmitted by the ancient poets, without our common sense being aware of the important connexion, in their opinions, between *death* and *burial*, and without our sharing in their sensibilities, at the thought of a departed spirit needing the consolation of sepulture; yet, in the case of Turnus, no circumstance exists to awaken those sensibilities. On the contrary, we close the Æneid under a secure conviction, that the body of Turnus would receive from the hand of Æneas, all the funeral honour which the poet has rendered it unnecessary to report. For Turnus, although he had exhibited much ferocity in the slaughter of Pallas, had yet displayed compassionate and generous feelings towards his dead body; delivering it to his friends,



avowedly, “*for the honour and consolation of* CHAP.  
“*interment:*” *who thought this very point* V.

Quisquis honor tumuli, quidquid solamen humandi,  
Largior!

When, therefore, Turnus has fallen by the arm of Æneas, who retaliates upon his person the slaughter of Pallas, we feel secure that the “*pius Æneas*” would likewise repay to his remains the same honour and consolation which he had so freely granted to that of Pallas.

But the case is totally different with respect to Hector; concerning whom, we may be permitted to entertain as much solicitude as Wolfe for Ulysses. We may meet this ardent critic with a judicious remark of Wakefield: “He might have reflected, how  
“great a curse the want of burial was ac-  
“counted by the ancients, and how preju-  
“dicial it was esteemed, even to the souls  
“of the deceased. We have a most parti-  
“cular example of the strength of this opinion,

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Æn. x. 493.



CHAP. “ from the conduct of Sophocles in his *Ajax* ;

v. “ who thought this very point sufficient to  
 “ make the distress of the last act of that  
 “ tragedy, which is extended after the death  
 “ of that hero, purely to satisfy the audience  
 “ that he obtained the rites of sepulture.”<sup>1</sup>

The pathetic pleadings of the shade of Patroclus to Achilles, extend, in fact, to cause the mind of the auditor, or reader, to require for the shade of Hector, what it there supplicates for itself.

And sleeps Achilles, thus the phantom said,

Sleeps my Achilles, his Patroclus dead ?

Living, I seemed his dearest, tenderest care,

But now forgot I wander in the air !

Let my pale corpse the rites of burial know,

And give me entrance in the realms below ;

Till then, the spirit finds no resting-place,

But here and there th’ unbodied spectres chase

The vagrant dead around the dark abode,

Forbid to cross th’ irremiable flood !

Now, the slayer of Patroclus, very dif-

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<sup>1</sup> Note, to the Proëm of Pope’s *Iliad*.



ferently from the slayer of Pallas, had declared CHAP.  
to his dying victim, and had agonized his v.  
departing spirit by the threat, that he would  
refuse him burial, and would expose his body  
for laceration, to the dogs and birds of prey.  
Had the poet, therefore, terminated the poem  
with the death of Hector, and the retaliating  
threat of Achilles, the common sense of every  
one must have caused him to be left in irre-  
mediable anxiety. There must always have  
remained a melancholy persuasion, that the  
threat of Achilles had been carried into exe-  
cution; first, on account of the violence of  
nature experienced in Achilles; and next, be-  
cause Hector had himself afforded *a just cause*  
for the threat. The two cases, therefore, upon  
which Wolfe would reason as parallel, are  
directly contrary to each other, and must  
yield contrary conclusions. It follows then,  
that the introduction of the funeral of Hector  
was requisite, upon a principle of taste and  
feeling alone, for bringing the Iliad to a perfect  
termination. We shall presently perceive,



CHAP. that it was necessary to the poem, upon a  
<sup>v.</sup>  
principle of rule and art also.

But it would have been contrary to all probability, and therefore unnatural, that Achilles should have paid those consolatory honours to the body of his adversary, while the body of his friend and favourite remained unburied. It was, therefore, necessary, as it was natural, that the latter should receive those honours the first in order, as he had fallen the first in time. The poet, therefore, duly introduces the previous funeral of Patroclus, which becomes, at the same time, a powerful means towards disposing the temper of Achilles, to permit the other; a sense of the consolation which himself had experienced, aiding to impress and enforce upon his naturally upright mind, the claims of Priam to a similar consolation.

Thus then, the *sepulture* of Hector, inseparable from the notion of his *death*, according to the scheme of the poem; but of the accomplishment of which it was rendered necessary that



the hearer should be assured, forms the proper CHAP.  
V.  
and perfect end of the Iliad; for, as soon as that is completed, there remains no further circumstance to complete, in that divine preliminary transaction. And thus, we thoroughly trace, and clearly discern, the unbroken chain of causes and effects, which hold in connexion the *beginning* and the *end*.

3. But we discern, with equal clearness, in the extent of that chain, *a principal articulation*; which unites the former part, proceeding from the beginning, with the latter part, which terminates in the end; which articulation, is *the death of Patroclus*. This great and governing incident, which, Heyne observes, “constitutes *the very marrow* of the “poem,” forms its true μέσον — *middle*; that, namely, “*which has one thing to precede it, and another thing to follow it.*” Or, as Aristotle also speaks, by a different figure, that which forms “a sort of extreme *summit* ;”<sup>1</sup> after having ascended to which from the base,

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<sup>1</sup> τὸ μέσον εἶναι πῶς ἀκρον. Eth. ii. c. 6.



CHAP. on one side, we commence our descent to the

v.

same level, on the other side. At this middle point, or central summit, between the opposite bases of the argument, we find the determination to *inaction* in the chief instrument cease, and a determination to *violent action* succeed. The poem is here divided into its two principal parts; measured, not by an arithmetical but by a *moral* rule;<sup>1</sup> sixteen books being engaged in overcoming *the inaction*, and the remainder in accomplishing the effect to be produced by *the action*. That is, the larger division is assigned to the time employed in subduing the resistance of the will, in the instrumental agent; and the sequel, which relates the effect wrought by the will so subdued, is made to proceed by a more rapid progress.

Finally, although this *ὅλον*, or *whole*, possesses considerable magnitude and magnificence, yet we are able, συνορασθαι την αρχην και το τέλος<sup>2</sup> — to *contemplate, in one and the same view, both its beginning and its end*. For, who

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 31. <sup>2</sup> c. 24.



can close the poem, with the completion of **CHAP.**  
Hector's burial, by the aid, and under the **V.**  
protection, of Achilles, but must, in the same  
moment, perceive, that "*the will of Jove was*  
"*therein accomplished?*" Such is the primary  
argument of the Iliad, which a diligent exa-  
mination of its *narrative* discloses to us; and  
which, at the same time, agrees with every rule **CHAP.**  
of Aristotle, and yields all the results which **VI.**  
he has declared.



## CHAPTER VI.

OF THE PROËM OF THE ILIAD, AND OF THE ARGUMENT WHICH  
IT PROPOUNDS.

CHAP. VI. **BUT** it is not in *the narrative* alone, that we ought to be able to discover the primary argument; it ought to be discoverable also in *the proëm*, or *introduction of the subject*; the merit of which consists, in briefly introducing to the auditor, that which is to constitute the object of his interest and expectation. Quintilian affirmed, that the proëm of the Iliad possesses this property in the most perfect degree; and yet, certainly, as it is now read, it proposes no other subject than *the anger of Achilles*, and its destructive consequences to the Greeks. “Homer,” says Quintilian, “did not merely observe, he moreover instituted the rule for proëms. He conciliates the will of his auditor, by invoking the goddesses who were supposed to preside over poets; he secures his attention, by



“the grandeur of the matter which he pro- CHAP.  
pounds; and he enables him to seize the VI.  
subject, *by a rapid and compendious notifi-*  
*cation of the sum of the whole argument, — et*  
*docilem, summa celeriter comprehensa, facit.*”<sup>1</sup>

But, when it is said, that a proëm, or exordium, contains a compendious notification of the sum of the whole argument, it is to be understood with relation only to those contemporary auditors for whom it was first composed, or to those whose minds are brought into a similar condition with theirs, by having acquired a previous knowledge of the general subject; to whom little is then requisite, for drawing their attention to a point, with which they have already some acquaintance. It cannot mean, that the notification of the proëm will be sufficient to supply all that knowledge, to those who are perfectly ignorant of the whole subject. Apply this reasoning to the proëms of Virgil, Milton, and Tasso, and its truth will be apparent. They were

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<sup>1</sup> Quintilian. Inst. x. L. i. c.



CHAP. addressed to those, to whom their respective  
VI. subjects were notorious and familiar; and they  
were directed to their memory, more than to  
their intelligence. They were rather *allusive*,  
than *instructive*; and were intended to awaken  
recollections, rather than to impart information.  
Addressed to a Chinese or a Peruvian, they  
would have conveyed no information at all. It  
was the same of the proëm of the Iliad.

To those, therefore, who are entirely un-  
apprized of the true primary argument of the  
Iliad, the proëm will not appear to answer  
to the character ascribed to it by Quintilian;  
but, to those who recognise that primary ar-  
gument, as we have now recovered it from  
the narrative, the proëm, extricated from  
the perplexity in which latter ages have in-  
volved it, will be found to allude directly  
to it; and to propose, in brief, that very same  
argument, namely, the sovereign power of the  
divine will, over the human will in Achilles.  
And this consideration furnishes a complete  
answer to a stricture of Wolfe, who says;  
“ that when Aristotle pronounced the length



“ of the Iliad to be *comprehensible in one view* — CHAP.

“ *ΕΥΣΥΝΟΠΤΟΝ*, notwithstanding that its very length

VI.

“ was proverbial among the ancients, he formed

“ his judgment on a supposition of the poem

“ being *read*, not *heard* or *listened to*.”<sup>1</sup> But

this distinction is without any force. For

the auditors, who knew beforehand that the

poem was to end with a demonstration of

the superiority of the divine will, in a parti-

cular action of notoriety, were as capable of

connecting that issue with the introductory

proposition of that superiority, as if they had

read it in their closets. Nor would any in-

terruption in the recitation more impair the

connexion, than the necessary pauses in the

reading. The progress of the simple argument

of the narrative, would only be occasionally

suspended in both cases, until resumed.

In ancient times, this was evidently the

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<sup>1</sup> Aristoteles quum *ευσυνοπτον* *μηκος* vidit in Iliade (Poet. c. 23.) etsi ipsa longitudo ejus apud veteres in proverbium cessit, de *lecta* sic judicavit, non de *audita*. Prol. ad Hom. p. 110. not.



CHAP. VI. argument which the first seven lines of the poem naturally presented to the mind; but, the later contrivance of punctuation, which was devised for the purpose of rendering language more distinct and perspicuous, has, in this instance, only served to render it perplexed, and unintelligible. Let us observe the progress of this effect; and let us first consider those seven lines, freed from all punctuation whatever. They will then stand thus:

μηνιν αειδε θεα Πηληϊαδεω Αχιλλης  
 ουλομενην η μυρι' Αχαιοις αλγεα θηκε  
 πολλους δ' ιφθιμους ψυχας αιδι προΐαψεν  
 ηρων αυτους δε ελωρια τευχε κυνεσσιν  
 οιωνοισι δε πασι Διος δε τελειετο βουλη  
 εξ ου δη τα πρωτα διαστητην ερισαντε  
 Ατρεϊδης τε αναξ ανδρων και διος Αχιλλευς.

These lines will yield the following literal import, unpunctuated:

Sing goddess the wrath of Achilles son of Peleus  
 Destructive which imposed numberless afflictions on the  
 Greeks  
 And sent prematurely to the grave many valiant souls



Of heroes and made them a prey to the dogs  
 And all ravenous birds but the will of Jove was accomplished  
 Even from the time when first separated in contention  
 Atrides king of men and godlike Achilles.

CHAP.  
VI.

If we would now punctuate these lines, with a view to their direct and most obvious sense, by applying the common principles of language to their matter, and without any prepossession in the mind; we shall perceive, that they naturally divide themselves into *two paragraphs*, each depending upon the agent or noun by which they are severally introduced, viz. 1. *the wrath of Achilles, &c.*, and, 2. *the will of Jupiter, &c.* We shall further perceive, that these two paragraphs are distinguished, in a relation of opposition, by the disjunctive particle  $\delta\epsilon$ , which is equivalent to *but, yet, nevertheless*. This distinction of opposition, marks the pre-eminence of the latter paragraph; and we are sensible, that although the  $\mu\eta\nu\iota\varsigma$ , or *infuriated will of Achilles*, and its disastrous effects upon the Greeks, meets us immediately on the threshold of the poem, yet it is as immediately succeeded, and super-



CHAP. VI. seded, by *the will of Jupiter*, as paramount, and controlling that infuriated will “*from the time of its first incensement.*” It will thus be found, that the proëm, far from being sparing in its communication, as Wolfe and Heyne pretend, contains the essence of all that is diffused throughout the narrative, from thence unto the end; and that, to those who possess a previous general knowledge of the subject which the poet proposes to celebrate; as was the case of the first auditors; it contains, as Quintilian affirms, a compendious notification of the sum of the whole. Those lines, therefore, if attentively and critically read, will thus, in a manner, punctuate themselves:

ΜΗΝΙΝ αἰδε, θεα, ΠΗΛΗΪΑΔΕΩ ΑΧΙΛΛΗΣ

ουλομενην, ἥ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς αλγεα θηκε,

πολλοὺς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς αἶδι προΐαψεν

ἥρωων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλωρία τεύχε κύνεσσιν

οἰωνοῖσι τε πασι· ΔΙΟΣ ΔΕ ΤΕΛΕΙΕΤΟ ΒΟΤΑΗ,

ΕΞ ὧν ΔΗ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε

Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ Διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς.



This punctuation will demand a corresponding alteration in the translation of Pope, which CHAP.  
VI  
may, perhaps, be thus supplied :

ACHILLES' WRATH, to Greece the direful spring

Of woes unnumbered, heavenly goddess, sing !

That wrath, which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign

The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain,

Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore

Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore :

YET, wrought TH' ALMIGHTY FATHER to fulfil

The sure decrees of HIS RESISTLESS WILL,

EV'N FROM THE DAY when, rous'd to strife, as foes

Atrides and Achilles first arose !

I know not what sort of dignity Blair supposed that *a modern* would require in the opening of a great epic poem,<sup>1</sup> that can rise above the elevation of this. The *proëm*, thus directs us to expect generally, *the perpetual accomplishment of the divine will throughout the poem*, whatever opposition it might find in the angered will of Achilles; while the

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 33.



CHAP. *narrative* lays open to us all the particulars,  
 VI. in which that divine will was so accomplished.

That the first seven lines of the Greek were so read, and so understood, in the first ages of the *Iliad*, cannot well be questioned, if we temperately reflect upon the simplicity of their construction and import; upon their natural connexion and dependance on each other; and upon their exact correspondence with the pervading argument of the poem drawn from its narrative; and, if we duly weigh the little that remains of ancient authority for fixing that primitive reading.

The author of the treatise, *περί της Ὁμήρου ποιήσεως*<sup>1</sup> — *Of the poetry of Homer*, shows, that Homer was commonly understood as uniting in this poem, the operations of the human will and of the divine will, for the purpose of inculcating, *the dependance of the former upon the latter*. “Homer,” says this writer, “thought, “as the most distinguished of the philosophers,

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<sup>1</sup> Hom. Barnes. p. 54, 55.



“ Plato, Aristotle, and Theophrastus thought  
 “ after him, that all events do not come to pass  
 “ by fate alone; but that something depends  
 “ upon men, who possess a free-will, yet so  
 “ as to be *in some manner* combined with a  
 “ necessity. As when a man, acting *according*  
 “ *to his will*, falls into that which is *contrary*  
 “ *to his will*. And this he distinctly shows  
 “ in many places, as in the beginning of each  
 “ of his poems. In the Iliad; where he says,  
 “ that the anger of Achilles was the cause  
 “ of the destruction of the Greeks; and then,  
 “ *that the will of Jupiter was effected.*” Eusta-  
 thius, many ages after this writer, observed  
 much to the same purpose: “ Homer pre-  
 “ pares the mind for the magnitude of his  
 “ poem, by promising innumerable heroic  
 “ achievements; and then subjoins, as *the*  
 “ *crown or summit of his argument* — κορωνίδα  
 “ *τινα επιτιθεις αυξησεως*, that *the will of Jupiter*  
 “ *was accomplished* — Διος δ’ ετελειετο βουλη.”

From these remarks, thus much at least  
 is manifest; that the proëm was not consi-  
 dered as proposing merely that “ most short



CHAP. VI. “and single subject,”<sup>1</sup> *the anger of Achilles,*  
 considered in itself; but, in its relation to *the*  
*supreme will of omnipotence*, which forms the  
 crown or summit of its argument.

Let us now observe, what has been the effect of punctuation upon those seven lines. It has been, to destroy the natural relation of the two paragraphs; by mutilating the latter, and divorcing it from the former. Eustathius, though he was sensible that the relation of the divine and human wills, and the superiority of the former, was the main object in Homer's mind in enouncing his exordium, yet experienced a perplexity, introduced into the construction by some critics of an earlier age; which has confirmed its effect since the introduction of printing, rendering vexatiously intricate what in itself is perfectly simple. The subject immediately mentioned, being the anger of Achilles; that subject was at once seized upon, as containing *the whole* of the poet's proposition, to the ex-

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 24.



clusion of what was to follow: just as if a person, on receiving an order, should run away with the first half, and not wait for the remainder. The remaining lines, thus divested of all reason for their existence, are rendered unintelligibly obscure; and the obscurity thus artificially induced upon them, is erroneously supposed to exist in them. Hence alone it is, that Heyne found it necessary to apprise his readers; that “ grammarians have raised  
 “ many questions, on the subject of *the ex-*  
 “ *ordium* — quæstiones grammaticorum sunt  
 “ plures *super exordio*.”

What has chiefly caused that obscurity, is, that the clause, ΔΙΟΣ ΔΕ ΤΕΛΕΙΕΤΟ ΒΟΥΛΗ, which pertains to, and introduces the *second paragraph*, has been cut off from it, and thrown into a parenthesis appended to the *first*. This we find to have been the case as early as Dio Chrysostom, who closes the proëm with that clause. A problematical question has been created by this confusion, with respect to the intention of ΕΞ ΟΥ, which begins the following line; and with respect to *the verb*, to which it is to be



CHAP. VI. understood to refer. To resolve which artificial difficulty, criticism has put itself upon a disproportionate research, and has overstepped its object. According to the common phraseology of Homer, ἐξ οὗ, relates to ΤΕΛΕΙΕΤΟ. Aristarchus, the most ancient authority to which we can appeal, and who lived in the second century before the Christian era, so referred it. And although Heyne would condemn his judgment by an arbitrary and summary sentence of, “*parum commode*,” and would throw it back, (with the generality of those who preceded him,) to προῖαψεν and τευχεν; yet it is certain, that in every instance in which Homer uses ἐξ οὗ, as a reference of *time*, he employs it, both in his Iliad and Odyssey,<sup>1</sup> in the manner in which Aristarchus would understand it here; and as the simplicity of the sense distinctly requires. ΔΙΟΣ ΤΕΛΕΙΕΤΟ ΒΟΥΛΗ, (ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ) ΕΞ Οὗ ΤΑ ΠΡΩΤΑ ΔΙΑΣΤΗΤΗΝ ΕΡΙΣΑΝΤΕ ΑΤΡΕΙΔΗΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ

<sup>1</sup> Conf. Il. viii. 295. xxiv. 638. 766. — Od. ii. 90. viii. 539. xi. 167. xiv. 379. xvi. 142. xvii. 103. xviii. 180. xix. 223. 596. xxi. 303. xxiii. 18.



Αχιλλεύς. — *The will of Jove was accomplished,* CHAP.  
*from the time when Atrides and Achilles were* VI.  
*first divided by contention.* The unknown author

of the *Epitome Iliados*, discovers the same just apprehension of that relation, in his version of the passage:

Iram pande mihi Pelidæ, diva, superbi,

Tristia quæ miseris injecit funera Græcis,

Atque animos fortes heroum tradidit orco;

Latrantumque dedit rostris volucrumque trahendos

Illorum exanguis inhumatis ossibus artus:

Confiebat enim Summi sententia Regis,

Ex quo contulerant discordi pectore pugnas

Sceptiger Atrides et bello clarus Achilles.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the proëm proposes, *the perpetual superiority of the divine will*; and it consequently admonishes us, to look forward always for that superiority, whatever contrary appearances might intervene. So that any apparent success in opposition to it, amounts in effect to a notice; that we shall presently see it vindicate itself, and finally overcome

<sup>1</sup> Poetæ Lat. Minores, T. iv. p. 617. Ed. Wernsdorf.



CHAP. VI. its opponent. To make good this proposition, it is evident that Homer could not have concluded his poem with the death of Hector, and the triumphing threat of Achilles which accompanied it; because, it would then have left Achilles in the unrestrained indulgence of his own will, and exulting in the accomplishment of his own determinations, in direct contradiction of that proposition. The situation and circumstances of Achilles at the end of the twenty-second book, were therefore, of themselves, a sufficient warrant, that the poet had not yet fulfilled his promise; and, that if the poem had ended there, it would have been deficient of its promised length. Not, as is contrarily assumed, that it is luxuriant in the two following books; an error, resulting necessarily from a misapprehension of the true primary argument. The proëm therefore, restored to its original integrity, directs us to expect, and to require, that Achilles should be again reduced from his apparent state of mastery, and be finally subjected to the rule of the supreme will; as he



had before been reduced and subjected, in CHAP.  
 the great incident which forms *the middle* of VI.  
 the poem. That second, and final coercion  
 of his will, and the demonstration of it to the  
 entire satisfaction of the auditor, constitutes  
 the proper *eventus* — *τελος*, or *end* of the poem;  
 according to the principles of rule and of art,  
 no less than of feeling and of taste. And  
 thus, I think that I have both shown the error  
 of Heyne's affirmation, "that the proposition  
 "of the exordium does not thoroughly cor-  
 "respond with the sum of the poem and  
 "narrative;" and that I have supplied, what  
 Wolfe pronounced it impossible to supply;  
 evidence, that the Iliad ought, by rule of  
 art, to conclude with the funeral of Hector;  
 as being the *last article* of the divine pur-  
 pose, in the ordained preliminary to the de-  
 struction of Troy.

Heyne, Damm, and all those who entertain  
 the hypothesis, that Homer represents Jupiter  
 as having no other end in view in the action of  
 the Iliad, than to give indulgence to the wishes  
 and supplications of Achilles, and to accomplish



CHAP. VI. that reparation to his feelings which he sought by the prayer of Thetis, cannot have reflected, that in that hypothesis they identify the will of Jupiter with that of Achilles; and thus make the *Διος βουλη* — *the divine will*, nothing else in fact than *the divine adoption* of the *μηνις*, or *infuriated will* of Achilles, with all its folly and all its iniquity; of whom Homer makes Neptune pronounce, on account of that infuriated will,

οὐ οἱ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ οὐδ' ἠβαιαί.

His mind is destitute of common sense.

This unavoidable consequence of their hypothesis, becomes therefore a conclusion *ad absurdum*, which fundamentally destroys it.

Thus, whether we seek the primary argument in the narrative, or in the proëm, we find it to be the same in each; viz. “the  
“sure and irresistible power of the divine  
“will, over the most resolute and determined  
“will of man; demonstrated in the case of  
“Achilles.”

That this great doctrine is not merely a



*moral*, accruing from the argument; or, as a CHAP. VI.  
 learned author expresses it, “*pietatis præcep-*  
 “*tum non nisi* ὥς ἐν παραδῶ *traditum;*”<sup>1</sup> but  
 that it is the very substantive argument it-  
 self upon which the whole poem is founded;  
 is evident from these two considerations.  
 First, that it is the express proposition of  
 the *proëm*, freed from the bonds of punctua-  
 tion, which have so long disabled it from  
 declaring its meaning. Secondly, that all  
 the events which succeed each other in  
 the *narrative*, tend to demonstrate that one  
 great sacred fact, and nothing else; and, that  
 the final and entire establishment of that de-  
 monstration, is the end of the poem. Within  
 the compass of this *one argument*, are em-  
 braced all its details; all its *speciosa mira-*  
*cula*, its various, crowded, tumultuary, and  
 splendid particulars; which, as in the real  
 world from which they are so exquisitely  
 copied, appear to proceed by chance and  
 without order; while the overruling and re-

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<sup>1</sup> Bruckeri Hist. Crit. Philosoph. T. i. p. 430.



CHAP. VI.  gulating will, rarely affords evidence of its

plans, except by the determination of catastrophes. Not reversely, as the common hypotheses assume; that religious allusions are only introduced incidentally, to give elevation to a favourite tale. Homer selected, with consummate judgment, a case which occurred in traditional story, to ground his great argument; and which, in his hands, it was eminently calculated to sustain. That case occurred, in the progress of the Trojan war. But, that the history of that war was very secondary in the contemplation of Homer, is manifested by this fact; that, although it had lasted for upwards of *nine years*, he has left his readers almost in perfect ignorance of the particular events which preceded or followed the short space of *forty-two days*, within the compass of which, he found that incident which supplied him with his rich and fruitful argument.

I shall conclude this article, with a brief collation of the main arguments of Homer's two poems.



“Of stories, or poetical fables,” says Aristotle, “some are *simple*, and some *complicated*; that of the Iliad is simple, and that of the Odyssey, complicated.” The *simplicity* of the main action of the Iliad, has been thoroughly exposed in this, and the two preceding chapters; it consists, *simply*, in the bringing an honourable, and honoured, death upon Hector, by the instrumentality of Achilles. The main action of the Odyssey, is *twofold*; the bringing prosperity upon Ulysses, and destruction upon the suitors: which two operations work together, and are mutually *complicated* with each other. The primary argument of the Iliad, is the irresistible power of the divine will over the most vigorous energy of the human; that of the Odyssey, is the sure, though tardy blessing of heaven upon patient trust in divine aid, and its vengeance upon continued contempt of its judgments.

The latter poem has its *beginning*, in the desolate and apparently hopeless condition of Ulysses in the island of Ogygia, on the one hand; and in the apparently secure and tri-

CHAP.  
VI.  
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CHAP. VI. umphant state of the suitors in Ithaca, on the other. It finds its *middle*, in the return of Ulysses to Ithaca; which points out to the expectation, at one and the same time, the termination of his disasters, and of the security of the suitors. It attains its *end*, in the destruction of the suitors on one hand; and in the establishment of Ulysses in prosperity and peace, on the other. Nothing can be more perfect, or more easily intelligible, than this structure; according to those principles of reason and of nature, which Aristotle has reduced into rules of art. Yet, it is in no one particular of those principles more perfect, or more easily intelligible, than the Iliad, if the latter poem be viewed according to the rule of the true primary argument which it discloses; and which presents a *beginning*, a *middle*, and an *end*, of its *simple action*, as distinctly marked, and as truly corresponding to those principles and rules, as in the *complex action* of the Odyssey. The *absence* of Ulysses — his *presence* — and the *intermediate* point of his *return*, which introduces the

latter, are not more distinctly marked in the CHAP.
Odyssey; than the *inaction* of Achilles — his VI.
action — and the *intermediate* point of the death
of *Patroclus*, which introduces the latter, are
distinctly marked in the Iliad. The ultimate
effects, of the *presence* of the one, and of the
action of the other, are equally perfected by
the rule of the *divine purpose*; which is the
governing argument in both poems.

When Wolfe, therefore, imagined that he
saw so vast a disparity in the merits of the
two structures, and so manifest a superiority
in that of the Odyssey; the error of his view
proceeded, solely from his own unequal know-
ledge of the primary argument of each. But,
when both those arguments are equally known,
and are judiciously compared, a very different
estimation of their comparative excellencies
will be formed; and the mind will probably
be disposed to concur with Aristotle, in as-
signing that pre-eminence to the Iliad, which
Wolfe has magisterially adjudged to the Odys-
sey. “The more excellent fable, or argu-
ment,” says Aristotle, “will be that which

CHAP. VI. “is *simple*, or *single*, not as some say, that
 “which is *twofold*; and in which the transi-
 “tion is made, not from ill fortune to good,
 “but, on the contrary, from good fortune to
 “evil; not in consequence of any depravity,
 “but of some great error; and that, rather
 “in a good than in a bad character.”¹ This
 description plainly portrays the action of the
 Iliad, viewed according to instrumental and
 apparent causes. For, the extreme ferocity
 with which Achilles perpetrated the slaughter
 of Hector, was solely occasioned by *the error*
 of Hector; in permitting himself to exercise
 a similar ferocity, in the slaughter of Patroclus.
 Again: “I place in the *second* rank,” says he,
 “that kind of fable to which some assign
 “the *first* rank; that which is of a *double*
 “construction, like the *Odyssey*, and which
 “ends in opposite events, to the *good*, and
 “to the *bad* characters. That this passes for
 “the best, is owing to the weakness of the
 “spectators; to whose wishes, the poets ac-

¹ Poetic. c. 13.

“commodate their productions.”¹ And Longinus was certainly of the same opinion, when he pronounced; that the *Odyssey* is only *the epilogue of the Iliad*—*οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ’ ἡ ΤΗΣ ΙΛΙΑΔΟΣ ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ ἡ Οδυσσεΐα.*²

CHAP.
VI.

¹ Poetic. c. 13.

² Longin. Toup. p. 37.

CHAP.
VII.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE NATURE OF THE EFFICIENT AGENT, IN THE MAIN ACTION
OF THE POEM.

CHAP. VII. **W**E shall be more sensible of the force of the foregoing exposition of the primary argument, if we inquire somewhat more particularly into the *natures* of the efficient and instrumental agents in the main action of the poem; and into *the mode*, by which the influence of the former is exercised upon the latter.

Aristotle observes, ΤΑ ΣΠΟΥΔΑΙΑ *μαλιστα ποιητης* Ὅμηρος ην¹ — “Homer was pre-eminent “ as a poet of things *serious and important*.” We have ample evidence, in the argument which we have deduced from the Iliad, to convince us; that the mere exciting pleasure, or even admiration, in his hearers, by the recital of a tale of heroic achievement, was not Homer’s sole, nor his principal, object in composing

¹ Poet. c. 4.

that poem. His main design, was to impart CHAP.
VII.
to them that sublimer pleasure, which arises from exalted notions in religion and morals; and to effect this, he employed, as a means, a narrative of peculiar interest in their traditions. Twining remarks, “ what Aristotle regarded as the peculiar end of epic poetry, “ he has no where distinctly said.”¹ But the same writer is of opinion, “ that he held the “ end of the epic poem to be, according to “ the description of Bishop Hurd, *admiration*, “ produced by *grandeur* of design and *variety* “ of incidents, and sustained by all the energy “ and minute particularity of *description*.” But a consideration of the peculiar nature, and of the unity, of the governing arguments in the two poems of Homer, must convince us, that this description is defective, as it relates to him. His end was certainly, *to enforce his arguments*, which consist of some of the loftiest doctrines of religion; and, therefore, *instruction in those doctrines*, from which indeed sublime

¹ Twining's Aristotle, p. 563.

CHAP. admiration must result, was his chief design
VII.  in selecting them. And we may be assured, that whatever was the peculiar end of Homer's Epopœas, was held to be the end of epic poetry in general, by Aristotle; who has displayed such intimacy with the mind of Homer, and who presents him as the most perfect model of an epic poet. It will then follow, that the description of Bishop Hurd is defective, in excluding *instruction* from the means enumerated as necessary for producing *admiration* in epic poetry.

Twining, however, thinks, that “the giving
“greater pleasure was, in Aristotle's view,
“the *great end* of the art, and of all its
“branches;” without supposing any other
causes of that pleasure, than grandeur of design, variety of incidents, and particularity of description. And he adds, “nor does he
“any where appear to me to give any countenance to an idea, which rational criticism
“has now pretty well exploded — that *utility*
“and *instruction* are the end of poetry. That
“it may indeed be rendered, in some degree,

“ useful and improving, none will deny ; none, CHAP.
 “ that it ought to be made so if it can. But, VII.
 “ that the chief end of poetry is *to instruct* —
 “ that Homer wrote his Iliad on purpose to
 “ teach mankind *the mischief of discord among*
 “ *chiefs*, and his Odyssey, to prove to them
 “ *the advantage of staying at home and taking*
 “ *care of their families*—this is so manifestly
 “ absurd, that one is really astonished to see
 “ so many writers, one after the other, dis-
 “ couraging gravely in defence of it.”¹

In this passage, we receive a curious testimony of the extent to which error may be diffused, from the error of a first principle. The principle of error here, is a false view of Homer's primary arguments ; and because it would be manifestly absurd to suppose that he aimed at the particular instruction here stated, under a false view of those arguments, it is to be inferred, that he did not aim at instruction at all. But, take the right view of both his arguments, and it will

¹ Twining's Aristotle, p. 561.

CHAP. VII. be equally absurd to deny, that instruction, and sublime instruction, was his principal design.

Although Aristotle has not “ distinctly “ said,” yet he has very sufficiently signified, what he regarded as the end of epic poetry, and of all poetry. He considered “ *poetry*, “ under all its varieties, as a *creative art* (ac- “ cording to its etymon); the products of which, “ are *imitations* or *representations* of things,” moral or material. He tells us, “ that those “ imitations produce *pleasure*; and that *the cause* “ of the pleasure which they produce, is an “ innate desire in all men, *to learn*.¹” This is the abstract of his simple theory.

He thus tells us, that all *poetry* represents something to the mind which it easily *learns*; and that the learning of that something pro-

¹ ΕΠΟΠΟΙΪΑ δὴ καὶ ἡ τῆς τραγωδίας ΠΟΙΗΣΙΣ—πασαὶ τυγ-
χανουσιν οὖσαι ΜΙΜΗΣΕΙΣ τὸ συνολόν. Poet. c. 1. καὶ τὸ
ΧΑΙΡΕΙΝ τοῖς μίμημασι πάντας.—ΑΙΤΙΟΝ δὲ καὶ τούτου, ὅτι
ΜΑΝΘΑΝΕΙΝ οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσοφοῖς ἤΔΙΣΤΟΝ, ἀλλὰ καὶ
τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως. c. 4.

duces *pleasure*. For he elsewhere tells us, CHAP.
VII.
 “ that the mind feels no pleasure in hearing that
 “ which is so obvious as not to exercise the
 “ thoughts, or that which is so obscure as to
 “ be unintelligible to it; but only those things
 “ from which arises *knowledge* — ἡ γνῶσις γίνεται,
 “ either at the moment when they are uttered,
 “ or at least presently after, for it is *like*
 “ *learning* — γίνεται γὰρ οἷον μαθησις: otherwise we
 “ learn nothing.¹” Thus, then, the *gratification*,
 arising from *knowledge* administered to the
 mind by the *proper artifice of poetry*, is the
proper end of poetry in general, according to
 the opinion of Aristotle. That innate desire
to learn, he generalizes so as to embrace every
 kind of knowledge, and all classes of man-
 kind; for he says, “ that *to learn*, is the
 “ greatest pleasure, not to philosophers *only*,
 “ but equally to all men.” He, therefore,
 extends to all men the same sense, which, in
 philosophers, is gratified by the acquirement
 of the sublimest qualities of knowledge.

¹ Rhetor. iii. c. 10.

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Twining endeavours to explain away the meaning of the word *μανθάνειν* — *to learn*, in this position of Aristotle, and to reduce it to the mere sense of *recognising what we already know*; but in order to do this, he is obliged to violate the proposition of the philosopher. He says, “Aristotle is not speaking here of reasoners or inquirers, but of the vulgar, the generality of mankind; whom he *expressly opposes* to philosophers.”¹ But, do the words “not to philosophers *only*, but *equally* to all men,” oppose the latter to the former? On the contrary, they *unite both* under one general character. This is one of the numerous instances, in which we see the most learned men hurried away by system, so as not to notice what is before their eyes. What Aristotle meant by *μανθάνειν* — *to learn*, will be best explained by the words of Cicero, respecting the same innate appetite of the mind. “A desire to inquire, and to seek

¹ P. 187.

“ for truth, is the most prominent character CHAP.
 “ in the nature of man. When we are free VII.
 “ from the importunities of our necessary
 “ cares and occupations, we then are eager
 “ to see, to hear, to learn something — *aliquid*
 “ *videre, audire, addiscere*; and we think
 “ the knowledge of things occult or ad-
 “ mirable — *cognitionem rerum, aut occultarum,*
 “ *aut admirabilium*, necessary to our happiness.
 “ From whence we may understand, that
 “ whatever is true, simple, and genuine, is
 “ of all things, the most suited to the nature
 “ of man.”¹ There can be no question, that
 the *μανθάνειν* of Aristotle intended the same
 thing as the *addiscere* of Cicero, in this passage.
 Aristotle, indeed, illustrates his proposition
 by minute and trifling objects of knowledge;
 but it is only in order to show, that the *minutest*
object which attracts the attention of the vulgar,
 and the *grandest object* which engages the con-
 templation of philosophers, bear one common
 relation to the mind, that of *knowledge*.

¹ De Off. i. c. 4.

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But the objects of knowledge are various, both in quality and degree; they may be good or bad, important or trivial; wherefore Aristotle observes, “ that the subjects of “ poetry vary, according to the respective “ qualities and dispositions of poets. That “ those poets who are of an exalted mind — “ οἱ σεμνοτεροί, represent good and great actions, “ and the fortunes of good and great men; “ those, on the other hand, who are of a low “ mind — οἱ εὐτελεστέροι, occupy themselves with “ the actions of bad men, and in composing “ defamatory poems; as the former, in composing hymns, and encomiums of illustrious “ persons.”¹ Of those σεμνοτεροί, or poets of exalted minds; among whom alone are found epic poets, who treat of τὰ σπουδαία, *things grave and important*; Homer stands the first, both in time and in place. And here it may be observed by the way, that the very name of *epic* implies *instruction*; for, the ancient and Homeric sense of ἔπος, as also of

¹ Ib. c. 4.

μῦθος, was, *monitum, consilium*.¹ And, as μῦθοι CHAP.
did not originally denote, merely, fictitious VII.
tales; but, *instructively* fictitious tales; so,
ἐπεα signified poems, in which serious instruc-
tion and admonition was conveyed in a skilful
and artful narrative, representing some adequate
example. The greater is the poet, the more
he will concern himself with the quality of
the knowledge, which he shall impart. The
knowledge which Homer's poetry imparted,
was of the sublimest quality; and the superior
pleasure which it produced, arose from the
sublimity of its instruction, which was emi-
nently engaged in those high matters which
Cicero calls "*occult and admirable*." And hence
it will be evident; that Aristotle's idea of
the end of a perfect epic poem, was to pro-
duce such pleasure of admiration, as is ex-

¹ Ut semel huic rei assuescat lector, monendus est,
sexcenties generali vocabulo uti poetam, ubi conveniens
sententiis notio certa aliqua est elicienda. Ita, ἐπος, μῦθος,
est pro *monito, consilio, jusso et mandato, minis, precibus*.
Heyne. not. ad Il. i. 216 — 222.

CHAP. cited by the sublime and various instruction
 VII.  imparted in the epic poems of Homer; and that he considered, skill in design, variety in incident, and energy in description, as the means of art proper to poetry, by which that instruction was to be conveyed.

It is well, and pertinently observed by Blair; that “whosoever sits down to read “Homer, must consider, that he is going to “read the most ancient book in the world, “next to the Bible.”¹ In perusing that book, nothing is more striking than the similarity of manners and maxims which it exhibits, with those recorded in that only other book more ancient than itself. Treatises have been written to collect the numerous instances of those points of resemblance, but none of them with more laborious research or better success, than the little work entitled “*Homerus* ‘Εβραϊζων;”² in which, the learned and pious

¹ Lecture 43.

² *Sive, Comparatio Homeri cum Scriptoribus Sacris, quoad normam loquendi.* Auct. Zach. Bogan, e Coll. C. C. Oxon, 1658.

author has thoroughly attained his object; CHAP.
which was to show, not what some specu- VII.
lative writers have attempted to deduce from
that resemblance, that Homer must have been
acquainted with our sacred volumes; but,
the undeniable fact, of the close kindred that
subsisted in the age of Homer, between the
prevailing conceptions and modes of expres-
sion of Asiatic Greece, and those of the his-
torical times and places of our sacred Scrip-
tures. This analogy reveals itself in almost
every page; in domestic and civil usages,
in military apparatus, in religious ceremonies
and sentiments, in moral precepts, in pro-
verbial allusions, and even in the simplicity
of primitive associations and phrases. Nor
is it difficult to account for that kindred;
since both were descended from the same
patriarchal source, and were not very re-
motely situated from each other in point of
geographical position. When we read in
Homer, of

Jove's wondrous bow—————

Placed as a sign to man amid the clouds ;

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ἰρισσὶν εἰκότες, ὥς τε Κρονίων
 ἐν νεφεῖ στήριξε, τέρας μεροπῶν ἀνθρώπων.¹

can we with good reason doubt, that we discern a traditional vestige of that most ancient patriarchal record, in which we read: “I do set *my bow* in the clouds, and it shall be *for a sign of a covenant between me and the earth.*” It would be a most pleasing and profitable exercise, to trace the several features of this resemblance in all those various particulars; but it would be foreign to my present purpose, and would divert the thoughts from the direct channel in which, and from the scope towards which, I am desirous to keep the attention of my reader fixed. I shall therefore confine my observation to those analogies, by which the theology of Homer, clearly distinguishable from the popular theology of his age, reveals its relation to the traditional religion derived from the sacred patriarchal ages.

In nothing do we find the vestiges of that

¹ Il. xi. 27.

patriarchal original more notable, than in the CHAP.
sublime conceptions of religion which per- VII.
vade the poems of Homer; and which tend,
in an eminent degree, to purify the vulgar
superstition with which they are mingled.
In them, we find an established recognition
of the divine supremacy,¹ omnipotence,² and
omniscience;³ of the inscrutability of the divine
counsels;⁴ of the divine justice in punishing,⁵

¹ ἡμεῖς δὲ μεγαλοῖο Διὸς πειθώμεθα βουλή,
ὃς πασι θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀνασσει. Il. xii. 241.

Let us obey the will of mighty Jove,
Monarch of men below and gods above!

² Ζεὺς ἀγαθὸν τε κακὸν τε δίδοι· δυνατὰ γὰρ ἅπαντα.
(the only great, and only wise) Od. iv. 237.

As Jove ordains, shall good or ill ensue;
Whose pow'r unlimited can all things do.

³ εἰς Δία Τερπικεράυνον· ὃ γὰρ τ' εὖ οἶδεν ἅπαντα.
Od. xx. 75.

To thundering Jove: for well He all things knows.

⁴ Page 134, 6.

⁵ Ζεὺς σφέας τίσσειτο ἱκετησίῳ, ὃς τε καὶ ἄλλους
ἀνθρώπους ἐφορᾷ, καὶ τινύται, ὃς τις ἁμαρτή. Od. xiii. 213.

Vengeance is Jove's, whose eye o'er all extends;

Whose arm will punish whosoe'er offends.

CHAP. VII. mercy in pardoning,¹ and power in delivering.²

It was the rich abundance of these great and important truths, so perspicuously and forcibly conveyed, that rendered the volumes of Homer, to the people of Greece in ancient times, a sort of sacred code. “Homer,” says Macrobius, “is the fount and origin of all divine discoveries.”³—He has so crowded his whole “poetry with memorable sentences,” adds

¹ στρεπτοι δε τε και θεοι αυτοι —
 και μεν τους θυεσσι και ευχωλης αγανησι,
 λοιβη τε, κνισση τε, παρατρωπωσ' ανθρωποι
 λισσομενοι, οτε κεν τις υπεββη και αμαρτη. Il. ix. 493.

The gods (the only great, and only wise,)
 Are mov'd by offerings, vows, and sacrifice;
 Offending man their high compassion wins,
 And daily prayers atone for daily sins.

² ρεια θεος γ' εθελων και τηλοθεν ανδρα σαωσαι. Od. iii. 231.

God, with equal ease,
 Near or afar, delivers whom he please.

³ Homerus divinarum omnium inventionum fons et origo.
 L. ii. c. 10.

the same writer, "that all his sayings are CHAP.
"become proverbs, in the mouths of all men."¹ VII.

Those truths are indeed the primary parts of the composition; all the other parts being contrived and conducted with a view to establish, enforce, and give prominence to those grave and weighty interests. Homer himself, who delivered them, was assuredly not less conscious of their magnitude and importance than those who read them in his poems; and therefore we may be sure, that they held the same pre-eminence in his mind above all matters of inferior concernment, which they must ever hold in the minds of his auditors or readers. So that when his poems exhibit a series of human actions tending to illustrate and substantiate those great truths, the actions are secondary and subordinate, and the truth is the primary argument governing the narrative.

¹ Homerus omnem poesim suam ita *sententiis* farsit, ut singula ejus ἀποφθίγματα vice proverbiorum in omnium ore fungantur. L. v. c. 16.

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Hence it was, that the ancients contemplated him “as the high and towering
“summit, from whence all the springs, rivers,
“nay, the universal sea of knowledge, drew
“their elemental substance. As the cause,
“by whose operation all instruction was
“derived into common life.”¹ As such, his poems were continually cited by all the eminent teachers issuing out of the great Ionian school; the most illustrious of whom, Socrates, entitles him, σοφωτατος και θειοτατος² — *most wise, and most divine.*

From him they likewise drew the remarkable doctrine which I have already noticed; of the freedom of the human will, yet of the influential controul of that will exercised by the supreme will.³ What renders that doc-

¹ κορυφή μιν οὖν ἅπαντων καὶ σκοπός,

ἐξ οὗπερ πάντες ποταμοὶ καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα,

καὶ πᾶσαι κρήναι·

δικαίως ἀν' Ὀμηρος λεγοίτο. — δι' ὃν ἡ τ' ἄλλη παιδεία πᾶσα παρελθὲν εἰς τὸν βίον. — Dion. Halic. T. v. p. 187. T. vi. p. 756. Reisk.

² Plat. Alcib. 2. c. 7.

³ P. 193.

trine especially observable, in the view we CHAP.
 have taken of the primary argument, is, that VII.
 it discloses another remarkable correspond-
 ence with the primitive patriarchal doctrines
 in religion. In the same manner that we
 read indifferently in the Scripture; that
 “*Pharaoh hardened his heart,*” and that
 “*God hardened the heart of Pharaoh;*” so we
 read indifferently in Homer, that Achilles
 hardened his heart, and that the gods har-
 dened the heart of Achilles. In the same
 short speech, Ajax says of Achilles;

ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ

αγριον εν στηθεσσι θετο μεγαλητορα θυμον·
Achilles makes his iron-heart retain
Its stubborn purpose.
 and to Achilles;

σοι δ' αλληκτον τε κακον τε

θυμον ενι στηθεσσι θεοι θεσαν.¹
The gods that unrelenting heart have steeled.

¹ Il. ix. 624 and 632.

CHAP. This is exactly, ὑπάρχειν μὲν τὸ ἐκουσίον, τούτῳ δὲ
 VII.

ΠΩΣ συνάπτειν τὸ κατηναγκασμένον — *for a free-will to exist, yet to be in some way or other connected with a necessity,*¹ or superior influence. A question of awful fact, into which the mind of man can make no advances ; but from whence we may perceive, how much light the religious notions of Homer may derive from a discreet and judicious comparison with those primitive notions, of which we possess so authentic a record in that only volume which is more ancient than his own.

From the entertainment of all those sublime truths, resulted a consequence deserving of our most serious consideration, but which is not adequately pointed out for attention : that Homer recognised no such agency in the universe, as *τυχή* — *fortune or chance* ; and that the word does not once occur, either in the Iliad or the Odyssey. Macrobius remarked :
 “ Homer would not acknowledge what is
 “ called *fortune* ; he ascribes the government

¹ Page 193.

“ and direction of all things to *God alone*, CHAP.
 “ whom he denominates *μοῖρα*, *Fate*; so that ^{VII.}
 “ the word *τυχη*, is not mentioned in any part
 “ of the volume of Homer. Whereas Virgil,
 “ on the contrary, not only mentions and
 “ acknowledges it, but moreover ascribes to
 “ it the attribute of *omnipotence*.”¹ On which
 account, Macrobius considers Virgil as having,
 in this particular, “ *departed from the school of*
 “ *Homer*.”² Eustathius informs us, that the
 same remark had been made in more ancient
 times. “ The ancients, he says, pointed out for
 “ observation; that although Homer was ac-
 “ quainted with the verb *τυχεῖν* to happen, yet
 “ he was ignorant of the noun *τυχη*, chance or

¹ *Fortunam* Homerus nescire maluit, et soli Deo, quem *Μοῖραν* vocat, omnia regenda committit; adeo ut hoc vocabulum *τυχη* in nulla parte Homerici voluminis nominetur. Contra Virgilius non solum novit et meminit, sed *omnipotentiam* quoque eidem tribuit. L. v. c. 16.

² In nonnullis *ab Homerica secta* haud scio casune an sponte descisset. Ib.

CHAP. “fortune.”¹ Yet, we meet with it in the

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~~~~~ *Theogony* of Hesiod:

Εὐδωρή τε, Τύχη τε, καὶ Ἀμφίρω, Ὠκυρόη τε.<sup>2</sup>

In Pindar, it also occurs several times, but generally with reference to a divine power: σωτήρᾱ τυχή, παῖς Διός — *conservative fortune, daughter of Jupiter*.<sup>3</sup> It was not until after the latest of these great poets, that the word was brought “to signify among the Greeks, as Suidas speaks, the unprovidential government of the world:”<sup>4</sup> for, such was that issue of philosophy, of which the apostle says, φασκόντες εἶναι σοφοί, ἐμωρανθήσαν — “*professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*.”<sup>5</sup> What is here said

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<sup>1</sup> ὅτι το τῆς τυχῆς ὄνομα οὐκ οἶδεν Ὅμηρος. — σημειοῦνται οἱ παλαιοί, ὅτι το μὲν ῥῆμα το τυχεῖν, οἶδε Ὅμηρος, τυχήν δὲ οὐκετι, το ἐκ τοῦ τούτου ῥήματος ὄνομα. 878. 7. — φασιν, καὶ τὸ ετυχε καὶ ετυχησεν εἰδώς, τυχήν οὐ λέγει. 1494. 23.

<sup>2</sup> V. 360.

<sup>3</sup> Ol. xvi. 3.

<sup>4</sup> τυχή, παρ’ Ἑλλησιν ἀπρονοήτος κόσμου διοικήσις. — in v. τυχή.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. i. 22.



of  $\tau\upsilon\chi\eta$  — *fortune*, is equally true of  $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$  — *nature*; which was an agency totally unknown to Homer, and is, in fact, as Lactantius observes, only another name for the same imaginary agency.<sup>1</sup> The “*fortuna gubernans*,” and the “*natura creatrix*,” of the Lucretian school, were fictions of a later day; into which men seduced themselves, when (as the same learned father remarks) “*communem sapientiam non tenerent*”<sup>2</sup> — they no longer retained “*the common wisdom* of the earlier ages.” Or, in the language of Horace, “*insanientis dum sapientiæ consulti errarent*.”<sup>3</sup>

Here, then, is another notable analogy, between Homer’s poems and our ancient Scriptures; that, as  $\tau\upsilon\chi\eta$  and  $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$  — *chance* and *nature*, are not to be found in the latter, so neither are they to be found in the former. Homer, therefore, saw and acknowledged in

<sup>1</sup> Eundem tamen interdum *naturam*, interdum *fortunam* vocant. L. iii. c. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. c. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Od. l. i. 34.



CHAP. all things, the intervention and government  
VII. of the Supreme Ruler of the universe.

But although Homer possessed and imparted all these lofty doctrines, it is nevertheless as certain as it is astonishing, that he, at the same time, ascribed all those sublime attributes to the fictitious personage of the popular theology, whom the Greeks denominated *Zeus*, and to whom the Latins gave the name of *Jupiter*. It is the more necessary to insist upon this fact, that we may not appear to foster a subtilty which Cowper attempted to establish; that Homer has made a distinction in his poem, between the fabulous *Zeus*, and a *one supreme God*, to whom he ascribed those truly divine attributes. It would be a species of pious fraud, to countenance this subtilty by neglecting to expose it; which has no foundation in truth, and which Cowper grounds upon a single passage, uncollated with another, which would at once have revealed its fallacy. In *Odyssey*, xiv. 444, Homer makes Eumæus say to Ulysses:



ΘΕΟΣ ΔΕ ΤΟ ΜΕΝ ΔΩΣΕΙ, ΤΟ Δ' ΕΑΣΕΙ,  
ὅ, ΤΤΙ ΚΕΝ ὧ θυμῷ ΕΘΕΛΕΙ· ΔΥΝΑΤΑΙ ΓΑΡ ΑἴΠΑΝΤΑ.

CHAP.  
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Which Cowper thus translates :

*God gives, and God denies,*

*At his own will; for he is Lord of all. — v. 539.*

And he subjoins the following comment in a note. “ΘΕΟΣ — without a relative, and con-

“sequently signifying God, in the abstract,

“is not unfrequently found in Homer; though,

“fearing to give offence to serious minds

“unacquainted with the original, I have not

“always given it that force in the translation.

“But, *here*, the sentiment is such as *fixes the*

“sense intended by the author, with a pre-

“cision that leaves no option. It is observ-

“able, too, that — ΔΥΝΑΤΑΙ ΓΑΡ ΑἴΠΑΝΤΑ, (*he can*

“do all things,) is an ascription of power,

“such as the poet *never* makes to his *Jupiter*.”

Yet, if he had only turned to *Odyssey* iv, 237,

he would have found the very same ascription

of power made expressly to Jupiter, and in

the same words :

ΖΕΥΣ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ ΤΕ ΚΑΚΟΝ ΤΕ ΔΙΔΟΙ· ΔΥΝΑΤΑΙ ΓΑΡ ΑἴΠΑΝΤΑ.



CHAP. VII. It is evident, that the  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  of the former passage intends the  $Z\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$  of the latter; yet, on this latter passage, Cowper makes no remark, but merely renders it thus :

But good, or evil, is the lot of man

As *Jove* ordains, sole arbiter of each.

To be consistent, he should have followed the rule of the original, and should have employed the same terms in his translation of both passages :

But good, or evil, is the lot of man,

As *Jove* ordains; for *he is Lord of all*.

$Z\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$  — *Jupiter*, invested with the perfections of deity, yet, at the same time, degraded by many and great imperfections of humanity, is *the Efficient agent* in the main action of the *Iliad*.

But it is reasonable and just to believe, that Homer made that distinction in his own mind, which he has certainly not made in his poem; and, therefore, in contemplating *Jupiter* as the chief agent, we are to view him with the mind of Homer; and to direct our thoughts



CHAP.  
VII.

solely to those perfect qualities, which he has ascribed to the imperfect fiction. He represents him, as seated far above all the other divinities; *immersed in the contemplation of his own glorious perfection*,<sup>1</sup> and freely giving enactment to his own uninfluenced decrees; which, when enacted, constitute what Homer denominates *fate*. The nature of all the other divinities he appears to have portrayed, with a view to exalt, by contrast, the pre-eminent grandeur and majesty of that supreme divinity. It is very possible, that the circumstances of his time and country, may have operated to render it perilous, to inveigh openly against the absurdities of the popular theology; or to make an unreserved avowal of his own

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<sup>1</sup> αὐτος δ' ἐν κορυφῇ καθέζετο κῦδεϊ γαίῳν.

viii. 51.

τῶν ἄλλων ἀπ' ἀνέυθε καθέζετο κῦδεϊ γαίῳν.

xi. 81.

Meanwhile apart, superior, and alone,

Th' eternal Monarch, on his awful throne,

Wrapt in the blaze of boundless glory sat.



CHAP. VII. religious opinions, as, in an afterage, happened to Socrates; and he may have fastened upon the chief personage in that theology, characters disproportionately sublime, in the expectation, that the manifest discordancy of the two would eventually cause the fiction to fail and disappear, and leave the mind solely engaged with the reality of the divine truth; as was afterwards the case in the Ionian school of philosophy, of which he may be justly accounted the remote author, since its appeals were always made to his authority. And thus we find an easy, and a probable explanation of those apparent “absurdities and “contradictions in Homer;” which Hume could only account for, by referring them to a general “propensity to adulation in religionists.”

There are other doctrines of our ancient sacred writings, of which manifest features may be traced in the poems of Homer; especially, in the particular argument which we are now considering. Of these, I shall instance the following:



1. The doctrine conveyed in those words: CHAP.  
VII.  
*“The heart of the king is in the hand of the  
 “Lord, and he turneth it whithersoever he will.”*<sup>1</sup>

2. That contained in the proposition: *“If  
 “a man will not turn, God will whet his sword:  
 “He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.”*<sup>2</sup>

3. That which teaches, that man is often punished in the divine compliance with his prayer; as in the case where it is said:  
*“He gave them their desire, and sent a glut  
 “withal into their souls.”*<sup>3</sup> This is a case familiar to the experience even of the heathen world. The Roman satyrist has observed:

Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te  
 Conatus non poeniteat, votique peracti?  
 Evertere domos totas, optantibus ipsis,  
 Dii faciles.<sup>4</sup>

What scheme, what *prayer*, dost thou so well pursue,  
 But thou, thy scheme, thy *prayer*, may'st shortly rue?  
 What ruin oft the suppliant has incurr'd,  
*From gods too yielding to the prayer preferr'd!*

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. vii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. cvi. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Juvenal. Sat. x.



CHAP. VII. To the same purpose, is the reflection of Valerius Maximus: “We often seek in our prayers, that which it would be far better for us not to obtain. O mind of mortal men! in what extensive errors thou scatterest thy blind prayers!”<sup>1</sup> The dialogue of Plato, entitled *the second Alcibiades*, turns wholly upon this subject. “Thinkest thou not, asks Socrates, that there is need of the utmost prudence and precaution in supplicating the gods? lest what we ignorantly solicit as good, should prove, in the issue, to be calamitous. — Many,” says he, “desire to unpray their prayers.” Wherefore, he recommends, for a model of prayer, that wise supplication of an ancient poet:

ΖΕΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ, ΤΑ ΜΕΝ ΕΣΘΛΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΧΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΕΥΚΤΟΙΣ  
ΑΜΜΙ ΔΙΔΟΥ· ΤΑ ΔΕ ΔΕΙΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΧΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΑΠΑΛΕΞΕΙΝ.<sup>2</sup>

Ask'd, or unask'd, great Jove, O grant us good!

And be our pray'rs for ill by thee withstood!

#### 4. That doctrine contained in the propo-

<sup>1</sup> L. vii. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> c. 4. See p. 99.



sitions; “ *The wrath of man shall praise thee;*”<sup>1</sup> CHAP.  
 “ and, “ *For this cause I have raised thee up,* VII.  
 “ *to show in thee my power.*”<sup>2</sup>

5. That propounded in the declaration:  
 “ *My ways are not as your ways, neither are*  
 “ *my thoughts as your thoughts.*”<sup>3</sup>

The principles of all these several doctrines, may be distinctly recognised in the mind of Homer; and will continually suggest themselves to the mind of the reflecting reader, when he comes to consider *the mode*, by which the influence of the efficient agent is exercised upon the instrumental agent, throughout the poem.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. lxxvi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. ix. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Is. lv. 9.



## CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE NATURE OF THE INSTRUMENTAL AGENT, IN THE MAIN  
ACTION OF THE POEM.

CHAP. **H**AVING considered the nature of the Efficient  
VIII. agent, let us now consider that of the Instru-  
mental.

For this agency, Homer has made choice of an individual, in whom the free energies of the will acted with an intensity of operation, which has rendered him memorable in heroic story, by the extraordinary phenomenon exhibited in its excess. He appeared to be, what Patroclus described him to himself; absolutely “*untractable — unmanageable,*” by any power or contrivance whatever:

σὺ δ' ἈΜΗΧΑΝΟΣ ἔπλεον, Ἀχιλλεύ.<sup>1</sup>

He was therefore the most fit of all subjects, for demonstrating the irresistible efficacy

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xvi. 29.



of the divine government. Irritable, irascible, CHAP. VIII.  
 in the most extreme degree; susceptible of  
 instantaneous, yet fixed and permanent re-  
 venge; and relaxing the resolves of his will,  
 while incensed, to no human influence what-  
 ever, either of honour, of pity, or of shame.  
 Patroclus, who knew him well and loved  
 him much, did not describe him by too strong  
 a figure, when he said :

γλαυκη δε σε τικτε θαλασσα,  
 πετραι τ' ηλιβαται, οτι τοι νοος εστιν αωηνης.<sup>1</sup>

Some rugged rock's hard entrails gave thee form,  
 And raging seas produced thee in a storm;  
 A soul well suiting that tempestuous kind,  
 Thy heart so stubborn, so untam'd thy mind.

When the supplicating Alastorides implored  
 him to preserve his life, Homer marks the  
 desperate nature of his suit, by describing  
 the temper of him to whom it was addressed :

ου γαρ τι γλυκυθυμος ανηρ ην, ουδ' αγανοφρων,  
 αλλα μαλ' εμμεμαως.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Il. xvi. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xx. 467.



## CHAP.

## VIII.



No prayer, no moving art  
Can bend that fierce, inexorable heart.

He was, in short, what Horace represents him ;

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer ;

Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis.

Fierce, wrathful, pitiless, without remorse ;

And scorns all title but the right of force.

Such is the prominent character, under which Achilles stands before the reader of the Iliad, in his relations equally to friends and foes, with one only, memorable exception, his relation to Patroclus ; and it is this hard and untractable personage, who is to be rendered the pliant and yielding instrument to accomplish the divine will, although in direct opposition to the most strenuous resolves, and most vehement declarations, of his own.

But, though Achilles manifests that character in most of the scenes comprehended in the Iliad, yet, he must not be considered as exhibiting therein his genuine and native character. Considered in himself, and apart from the peculiar external and powerful causes



which so strongly excited his morbid irritability, and disfigured his genuine nature, we behold a very different man. We discover a compound character, not uncommon in different degrees among men, but existing in him in a very peculiar and extravagant degree; wherein, the finest qualities of the mind and heart are combined with a lamentable promptness to anger, which, while inflamed, overpowers for the time all the good qualities, by superinducing upon them a temper of almost frantic fury; but which, when it has subsided and passed away, leaves all those qualities in their native lustre, or even heightened by the action of self-condemnation which succeeds. The Iliad, by commencing with the insult and injury which Achilles sustained, introduces him immediately to the auditor, under the influence of that excitement which obscured his natural qualities; and which is too hastily assumed, as constituting his real and true character. Yet, Homer has been careful to intersperse



CHAP. various notices, what those qualities were.

VIII.

The very nature of the indignation first roused within him, on witnessing the impiety and selfishness of Agamemnon, and the contrasted facility with which he himself surrendered Briseis; his instantaneous submission to the precept of Minerva, in the first paroxysm of his fury; the testimony borne to his native generosity by Andromache herself; the exclusive partiality, which he bestowed on a person endowed with all the mild and amiable graces that adorned Patroclus; his own declaration to the unhappy Lycaon, that, until Hector had kindled his revenge by the slaughter of Patroclus, it was a pleasure to him to spare;<sup>1</sup> the attestation of Jupiter himself to his considerate and merciful nature; and the tenderness and generosity which he ultimately displayed to Priam; all these concur to show, that it would be a flagrant in-

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xxi. 100.



Achilles by the rule only of his unhappy temper, in a state of peculiar and unnatural excitement; since Homer manifestly intended to exhibit him, as Aristotle has observed, “*for an example of equity and moderation, rather than of harshness and severity*” — *ἐπιεικείας παραδειγμα ἡ σκληροτητος*.<sup>1</sup>

When, therefore, Horace introduces that well-known character which I have just cited, as the character proper for Achilles; he is to be understood as speaking with limitation, and with a view only to *poetical character*. Among those rules which he gives to poets, for rightly managing their subjects; he cautions them to observe a just correspondence, between the personages of their poems, and the circumstances in which they would place them. He warns them, that they ought either to follow the stories which are already public and prevalent; or, that they should at

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<sup>1</sup> Poet. c. 15. not. Heinsii.



CHAP. least take care, that those which they might  
 VIII.  invent be consistent throughout:

Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge.

Thus, says he; “ if you would follow com-  
 “ mon opinion, and *bring Achilles again* into  
 “ a poem;

—— Honoratum si forte *reponis* Achillem:

“ take care that you place him in the same  
 “ circumstances of character, in which he  
 “ is in a manner consecrated to poetry by  
 “ the genius of the greatest master. Let  
 “ him appear, *impiger, iracundus, &c.*” The  
 reason for which precept is plainly this; that  
 Achilles has been principally represented by  
 that great master, in his state of extreme  
 excitement, and with the actions to which  
 it led. If, therefore, any poet should intro-  
 duce Achilles altogether in a tranquil and  
 undisturbed state; unexcited by any causes  
 that should call forth the character in which  
 he is so well known in the *Iliad*; such an  
 Achilles, would be entirely new and strange



to the world of poetry, and in opposition to the habits and expectation of the auditors. CHAP.  
VIII.

Yet it is nevertheless historically true, that he possessed this latter character in a degree no less eminent, and with greater permanency, than that which was only symptomatic of his mental distemper. Of his ferocity and cruelty, no other instances are upon record, than those two; towards Agamemnon and the Greeks, and towards Hector, his family, and nation. But, in neither of those instances did they proceed from an original disposition to cruelty, but from the force of provocation; and it must be acknowledged, that the provocations were extraordinary and extreme, especially in the tempers and manners of the times. His own first and native impulses, were always upright, pious, and generous; nor does any thing discover itself in his nature of a contrary quality, until some powerful outward circumstance has provoked the morbid irritability of his temper, and forced it from the centre in which it would otherwise have naturally rested.



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Homer has exhibited, in these two instances of Achilles' anger, two of the greatest provocations to fury and resentment that the imagination can contemplate. First, an illustrious prince, and unrivalled warrior, conscious of his own high value in a confederacy, insulted and injured in the presence of his compeers, by the chief of that confederacy; and under shelter of the supreme authority, pledged to him by the injured party himself. Secondly, the slaughter of a friend beloved above all mankind, accompanied with vaunting defiance and barbarous insult; and with an avowed design, of depriving him of the consolation of sepulture, and of casting his body to be torn and devoured. Nothing can be conceived by the fancy, more calculated to rouse those passions to their highest degree of excitement; especially, in a mind naturally and sorely irritable and irascible. Those provocations, wrought their utmost effect upon the naturally irascible temper of Achilles' mind; nevertheless, he extricated himself from their dominion, on the instant that a positive evi-



dence of the divine will made itself sensible in his soul. Well therefore might Homer bear that testimony, by the mouth of Jupiter, to his true and genuine nature when undisturbed by outward causes : CHAP.  
VIII.

οὐτε γὰρ ἐστ' ἀφρων, οὐτ' ἀσκοπος, οὐτ' ἀλιτημῶν·

ἀλλὰ μάλ' ἐνδυκεὺς ἱκετῶ πεφεδησεται ἄνδρος.<sup>1</sup>

He is not senseless, thoughtless, deaf to pray'r;

But, kindly form'd a suppliant to spare.

Perhaps there is no character among men, compounded of excellent qualities and grievous defects, that more strongly inspires interest, than that in which we witness a good, generous, and affectionate heart, combined with a quick and inflammatory temper; where the

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<sup>1</sup> Il. xxiv. 157. The purport of the second line, and the quantity of the second syllable of ἀλιτημῶν, appear to fix the sense of that word to *inexorabilis*; as derived from α, and λιτομαι, oro. And this interpretation will be still further confirmed, by Achilles' own declaration to Lycaon:

πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Πατρόκλον ἐπισπείν μορσιμὸν ἡμᾶρ,

τοφρὰ τι μοι πεφιδεσθαι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ φίλτερον ἦεν.

Il. xxi. 100.



CHAP. rectitude of the native disposition is sure,  
VIII.

sooner or later, to restore the accidental perversion of the will. Nor is there any evidence of moral integrity less equivocal, or more engaging, than the immediate relinquishment of the most favourite and determined resolutions made in anger, on the first reflective and conscious sense of the excess to which they are proceeding. The subject of all morality is *the will*; wherever the will exercises the most entire and absolute self-coercion, there the morality is the most perfect. The difficulty of exercising that self-coercion, must always be in exact proportion to the violence of the previous action of the will in an opposite direction. In the case of Achilles; where its previous action had, through the most violent excitement of the passions, been intense; the promptness of his coercion of that intensity, at the sense of religious duty, which he eventually displayed, proved, that the morality of his nature was entitled to the encomium, which Homer places in the mouth of Jupiter.



The renunciation of his anger to Agamem-  
non, presents the noblest example of a great  
and upright mind. No reluctancies of pride,  
no spurious notions of honour, no salvos of  
extenuation, impair or mingle themselves with  
the simple and short sentence of concession,  
which he pronounces before Agamemnon and  
all the assembled chiefs. The native grandeur  
and independance of his soul stand revealed;  
and he yields himself to no other influence,  
than that which the divine dispensation, in  
the death of Patroclus, had exercised on his  
heart.

In his interview with Priam, the difficulties  
and struggles of the self-coercion which he is  
practising, are skilfully shown. Though con-  
straining himself to act with perfect sub-  
mission to the mandate of Jupiter, he yet  
feels his unhappy temper prone to disturb his  
purpose, as soon as the paternal sensibilities  
of Priam move him to become unseasonably  
importunate for the delivery of his son's body;  
and he sharply enjoins the aged monarch,  
to abstain from a conduct which he is sensible

CHAP.

VIII.



CHAP. may urge him again into excitement; and pro-  
VIII.  
voke him, contrary to his actual intention, to disregard, both the commands of Jupiter, and the rights of hospitality.

To produce here the whole of that last interesting scene, from the first interview with Priam to the consummation of the funeral rite of Hector, would be superfluous; but I would request the reader to review that scene, under the impression of this argument. He will perceive, that the whole transaction is grounded, upon the efforts of Achilles to coerce the rebellious motions of his own mind, and upon his concern to remove every cause or circumstance that might tend to inflame them; and, at the same time, to force himself, to act in every particular with exact obedience, not only to the letter, but also to the spirit, of the divine command. He will observe, in the sincerity of those efforts, how strikingly and affectingly the excellencies of his real and genuine nature break forth; and, by the ascendancy which they acquire, enable him, at length, to bring his obedience to a perfect



term. And he will be prepared, to comprehend the testimony borne by Xenophon to his renown, above that of all the other personages of heroic celebrity; “*that the Greeks were never tired of speaking or hearing of Achilles*” — ὥστε οὔτε λεγῶν οὔτε ἀκουῶν περὶ ἐκείνου οὐδεὶς ἀπάγορεύει.<sup>1</sup> And yet, this is the man who is pronounced “*inexorabilis*,” this is that

Pelidæ stomachus cedere nesci.<sup>2</sup>

It is to this basis of ingenuousness, generosity, and piety, which the omniscience of Jupiter recognised in the nature of Achilles, that his influential government is directed throughout the poem.

<sup>1</sup> De Venat. c. 1. p. 974, fol.

<sup>2</sup> Hor. Od. i. 6.



## CHAPTER IX.

OF THE MODE, IN WHICH THE INSTRUMENTAL AGENT IS INFLUENCED BY THE EFFICIENT AGENT.—GENERAL CONCLUSION FROM THE PRECEDING PREMISES.

CHAP. IX. LET us now observe *the mode*, in which that influential government is exercised upon its instrument.

1. The method devised for accomplishing *the death* of Hector, constituted the *μυθος*, or *secret counsel*, which Jupiter disclosed to Juno in the eighth and fifteenth books; but which he refused to disclose to her, in the first. It was conceived by *the will of Jupiter*, from the first moment that it was rendered necessary by the occurrence of resistance in the instrument; namely,

εξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε  
Ατρεΐδης τε ἀναξάνδρων καὶ διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς.

Ev'n from the day when, rous'd to strife, as foes  
Atrides and Achilles first arose.

It was coetaneous with the conception of



Achilles' prayer, preferred by Thetis; and was latently involved, in the ambiguous assent given to that prayer. That *iniquitous prayer*, sued for bitter suffering to his fellow-countrymen; but the apparent compliance with his suit, was to work a bitter anguish for himself, of the possibility of which he entertained no suspicion. It sued for glory, by the distress and humiliation of his adversary; but it was to procure him glory, by the self-humiliation of his own presumptuous and turbulent will. It sued for the divine sanction to his *inaction*; but it was to call forth the divine means of compelling him to return to *action*. In giving an equivocal assent to the terms of his prayer, Jupiter was far from complying with its spirit. His purpose, and that of Achilles, were in direct variance; and the purpose of the latter, was to be reduced to a conformity with that of the former. When, therefore, we read in the poem,

Θετιδος εξαίσιον αρνυ

ΠΑΣΑΝ επιχρηνε<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Il. xv. 598.



## CHAP.

## IX.

He will *the whole* iniquitous request

Perform of Thetis:

we cannot but be sensible, that a peculiar, and a severe meaning, is latent in the word *πασαν* — *the whole*; analogous to that where we read:

“He gave them *their desire*, they were *not*

“*disappointed* — οὐκ ἐστερηθησαν.” and again;

“He gave them *their desire*, and sent *a glut*” —

“*πλησμονην*.<sup>1</sup>

The state of obduracy, and posture of resistance, into which Achilles had wrought his own will; and his secure and entire reliance on the sufficiency of its energy, for holding fast the resolutions of his anger and revenge; exhibit a fearful, though only a temporary

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<sup>1</sup> ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς τὸ Αἶθμα αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξαπέστειλε Πλησμονὴν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν. Ps. cvi. 15. Of the Hebrew word יָוֶר, which the Greek interpreters here render *πλησμονη*, *glut* or *satiety*, (and which he renders *pestilentes morbi* — *pestilential diseases*,) Michaëlis observes: “The Septuagint and the Syriac interpreters render it “*satiety*; which is historically true, though it appears to “have been interpreted by an antiphrasis.” — *Suppl. ad Lex. Heb. in Verb. p. 2248.*



resemblance, to the hideous mood which Milton CHAP.  
describes by the mouth of Satan: IX.

Th' unconquerable will  
And study of revenge, immortal hate,  
And courage never to submit or yield,  
And what is else not to be overcome;  
That glory never shall his wrath or might  
Extort from me!<sup>1</sup>

Such, during his excitement, was the mood of Achilles towards Agamemnon; and, though not immediately or intentionally directed against heaven, yet, so long as it continued, its operation was in direct opposition to the will of heaven. But, that mood was to be abandoned and changed; and the will of Achilles was to be stripped of all its confident energy and tenacity. The events which he contemplated with ferocious complacency, as nothing more than a compliance with the favour which he had solicited, were working to a far different end. The series of those events, brought with it, in its progress, a

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<sup>1</sup> Paradise Lost, i. 106.



CHAP. variety of circumstances well qualified to  
IX. rescue him from the dominion of his rebellious  
temper; but, when all proved unavailing, they  
issued in an effect, which constituted the *cer-*  
*tain means* devised by omnipotence, for van-  
quishing that temper, and for reducing his will  
under entire subjection.

We shall the better discern the mode in  
which those means operated, by considering  
a case, analogous to it in the moral process  
by which it was conducted. The state of  
mind in Pharaoh, when he resolutely deter-  
mined not to permit the Hebrew people to  
depart from Egypt, resembled the distempered  
state of Achilles' mind, when he resolutely de-  
termined to take no further share in the action  
of the war. But, the will of Pharaoh was  
to be subdued, and forced from its own pur-  
pose. And by what process was the conquest  
effected? The Almighty's determined purpose  
was, that *he should permit* the Hebrews to  
depart; Pharaoh's determined purpose was,  
that *he would not permit* them to depart. Va-  
rious preliminary methods were tried, to induce



him to consent to their departure; but, when CHAP.  
 he remained inflexibly resolute in his resistance, IX.  
 “The Lord said unto Moses; yet will I bring  
 “*one plague more*, and after that *he will let*  
 “*you depart.*” That one plague more, was  
*the death of his first-born son.* “And it came  
 “to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all  
 “the first-born in the land of Egypt, from  
 “*the first-born of Pharaoh:—*and Pharaoh  
 “rose up in the night, and called for Moses,  
 “and said: Rise ye up, and *get forth* from  
 “among my people, as ye have said; and  
 “*get ye gone!*” He who intimately knew  
 the structure of the human nature, which him-  
 self had formed; who foreknew the sure suc-  
 cession of effects to causes; well knew, that  
*the stroke of death on the dearest object of the*  
*affections*, had a power that could suddenly  
 paralyze the will, and extinguish all its  
 vigour.

What the “*one plague more*” was to  
 Pharaoh, the *αλλη αμεινων μητις*<sup>1</sup> — the “*one*

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 121.



CHAP. IX. *“more effectual measure,”* which Achilles had invoked, was to Achilles. What *“his first-born son”* was to Pharaoh, *Patroclus* was to Achilles; and the will of the latter, could only now be mastered by a process, analogous to that which had subdued the will of the former. When Pharaoh saw his first-born slain, he exclaimed; *“Rise up, and get ye forth!”* When Achilles saw his *Patroclus* slain, he proclaimed;

νυν δ' εἰμ', ὄφρα φίλης κεφαλῆς ὀλετῆρα κίχαιω.

Yes — I WILL MEET *the murderer of my friend!*

From whence was this sudden revolution, in the wilful and pertinacious Achilles? It was caused solely by *the death of Patroclus*; which had been foreshown by Jupiter, to be a cause that would infallibly work that effect. If this narrative be founded upon a fact of experience; it demonstrates the sublimity of the poet's mind, in discerning its nature, and making choice of it for the subject of his poem. If it be altogether a fiction of his own imagination; it demonstrates the profundity of



his knowledge, of the springs of human acting, and of their perpetual subordination to the will and power of the supreme agent. CHAP.  
IX.

But, that death of Patroclus, was the ultimate effect of an apparent compliance with the terms of Achilles' prayer. The extreme calamities of the Greeks, for which he had so ardently prayed, and which followed his prayer, were designed by heaven to become causes, whose ultimate operation should be, to excite the sensibilities of Patroclus; since Achilles had deadened his own feelings against all sensibility, but such as might be excited by the calamity of that passionately beloved friend. The repulse of the Greeks to their fleet; which his furious imagination had anticipated, as the extreme term of their destruction; was permitted, in order to bring those calamities into immediate contact with the heart and affections of Patroclus, and provoke him to extort permission from his patron to take a part in the scene of conflict. Thus, all the incidents of the war, from the first secession of Achilles, that is, from the begin-



CHAP. IX. ning of the poem, are to be easily traced from cause to effect, until they terminate in the death of Patroclus; which concludes the period of Achilles' inaction, and gives commencement to the period of his action, which was *the end* of Jupiter's dispensation in causing that death.

II. But, Patroclus had not sustained *death alone* from Hector, he had endured from him, in the agony of death, the most insulting contumely, and the most barbarous menace, which the opinions of the age could devise; and to these were added, a contemptuous and vaunting defiance of Achilles himself. These circumstances reported to Achilles, and accompanying the tidings of his death, while they extinguished the former passion which had produced *inaction*, kindled in him a new passion, which impelled him *to action* with the utmost possible vehemence. He now thirsted for action, solely that he might slay Hector, and wreak upon his body greater indignities and greater barbarities, than Hector had been able to exercise on the body of Patroclus. Thus, *his will* now moved towards the scope



of the divine purpose; but, it was with a violence of momentum tending far to exceed it. The divine counsel therefore determined, to use it to the extent of its own limit; but, to restrain it from exceeding. Like other instruments of divine purpose; “ the “ hook was to be put into his nose, and the “ bridle in his lips, and he was to be turned “ back.” In prosecution however of his own purpose, he shortly encountered Hector, fought with him, and slew him; and thus accomplished the first article, in the divine action of the Iliad.

Had nothing arisen, to disturb the first order of causes and effects designed for the destruction of Troy; as they had proceeded into the tenth and last year of the war; Achilles would equally have encountered Hector, by the impulse of heroic ardor alone, and would have slain him. And no just doubt can be entertained; that he would, in that event, have been as prompt to honour the remains of so illustrious a prince and warrior with suitable sepulture, as he had been to pay the



CHAP. same honour to the remains of Eetion, the  
 IX. father of Andromache, when he slew him at  
 the sack of Thebe; to which generous conduct Andromache herself bore this witness:

ἦτοι γὰρ πατέρ' αἶμον ἀπέκτανε δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,  
 ἐκ δὲ πόλιν πέρσε Κιλικῶν εὐ ναιετάωσαν,  
 Θῆβην ὑψιπύλον· κατὰ δ' ἔκτανεν Ἡετιῶνα,  
 οὐδὲ μιν ἐξενάριξε· σεβασσάτο γὰρ τογε θυμῷ.  
 ἀλλ' ἀρὰ μιν κατέκχευε σὺν ἐντέσι δαιδαλεοῖσιν,  
 ἥδ' ἐπὶ σῆμ' ἔχεεν.<sup>1</sup>

The fierce Achilles wrapt our walls in fire,  
 Laid Thebe waste, and slew my warlike sire.  
 His fate compassion in the victor bred;  
 Stern as he was, he yet revered the dead,  
 His radiant arms preserved from hostile spoil,  
 And laid him decent on the funeral pile:  
 Then raised a mountain where his bones were burn'd.  
 Such would have been his conduct to Hector  
 also; had his feelings not been excited beyond  
 their native temper, by the insult, the threat,  
 and the defiance, unhappily and culpably

<sup>1</sup> Il. vi. 414.



pronounced by Hector, over the fallen and expiring Patroclus. CHAP.  
IX.

But it was *the will of Jupiter*, that he should still act in the same manner, notwithstanding the excitement of his temper, and the perversion of his will; that he should act by the rule of his ordinary, natural feelings, and not by that of his actual, unnatural incensement. *His will*, was therefore to be once more reduced into a state of conformity to that *divine will*. But, a severe process was no longer necessary to produce that conformity. The first conquest, had forced the ground-work of resistance; and the will, having been once made to bend, acquired, by the principles of nature alone, an incipient habit or disposition, which rendered a second flexure less difficult. Circumstances of a mollifying nature, as has been already shown, conspired to promote that pliancy; so that a direct notification of the will of Jupiter, was now alone sufficient to restore Achilles to himself, and to cause him to consummate the action which the supreme will had determined to accom-



CHAP. plish, by his hand and with his concurrence.

IX.

Here, then, the original purpose attains its ultimate completion, in the complete performance of the funeral rite of Hector:

Διος δε ΤΕΛΕΙΕΤΟ βουλη,  
εξ ου δη τα πρωτα διαστητην ερισαντε  
Ατρείδης τε αναξ ανδρων, και διος Αχιλλευσ.

*Thus wrought th' Almighty Father to fulfil*  
The sure decrees of his resistless will;  
Ev'n from the day when, rous'd to strife, as foes  
Atrides and Achilles first arose.

And thus, we finally attain to “the height of  
“this great argument;” and plainly discover,  
that it was Homer’s object, no less than it  
was Milton’s,

“TO ASSERT ETERNAL PROVIDENCE.”

If there is any thing that lies *in promptu* —  
exposed to every eye, it is surely this simple  
and closely connected argument. It is to be  
traced, with the utmost facility, over all the  
various and intricate machinery by which the  
poem is made to move; all of which it em-



braces and encloses: although, it would now  
appear, like a crystal case, so placed for many  
ages past as to be imperceptible through its  
own transparency, until rendered apparent  
by an accidental refraction of light; while,  
at the same time, it clearly revealed all  
the rich and complex workmanship contained  
within it.

Wolfe observed, “that the exquisite ar-  
tifice which Aristotle discerned in the poem,  
“*must have been deeply hidden*, since it was  
“perceptible to very few of the ancients  
“*except Aristotle himself;*”<sup>1</sup> and Heyne re-  
marked, “that *after Aristotle*, very few,  
“especially among the moderns, have trod in  
“his steps.”<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless we now perceive,  
that Aristotle was right, and Wolfe and Heyne  
wrong, in their respective judgments of the  
argument of the poem; notwithstanding the

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<sup>1</sup> Tantam artem summæ actionis *absconditam* esse oportet,  
quandoquidem præter Aristotelem et ante eum paucissimis  
veterum suboluit. Prol. ad Hom. p. 124, 5.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 166.



CHAP. sarcasm of the former of these last, and the  
IX.  insinuation of the latter. That both of these were wholly unaware of that argument, has been fully shown; but their unacquaintance with it, was owing, not to its difficulty, but to its facility; not to its remoteness, but to its proximity; not to its obscurity, but to its perspicuity. Still, however, they failed to render themselves acquainted with it.

This *primary argument*, bears to the mass of incidents which fill the poem, the same relation, that the supreme and hidden purposes of Providence bear to the busied and varied occurrences of human life. Those high purposes proceed to their several ends, by a steady and uniform course, undiscoverable by man, unless in their issues, or by a particular disclosure; while the passions and activity of men crowd the earthly scene with incidents, wearing all the characters of chance and confusion. It is, in filling up *the world of his Iliad* with representations of human life, subordinately to the procedure of his primary argument, that Homer is especially



ποιητής — a *maker* or *creator* of interests; which CHAP.  
bear the very stamp of nature, and the IX.  
brightest semblance of truth. To this power  
of inventive genius, in which Homer no less  
excelled than in his judgment, Aristotle adverts  
when he says; “Homer, above all, has taught  
“how to *invent* with propriety and consistency.”<sup>1</sup>  
In truth, his descriptions; whether of facts or  
characters; are so perfectly accordant with  
our experience of human nature, that they  
appear to be transcripts from original reali-  
ties, rather than from pictures of his own  
imagination. In considering these, therefore,  
we are not to be constantly inquiring, what  
relation they each bear to the primary argu-  
ment; which would be the same as to inquire,  
of every ordinary occurrence of daily life,  
what relation it may bear to the great ends of  
the divine government. We are only to observe;  
if they are conformable to nature, at the times,  
and in the circumstances, in which Homer

<sup>1</sup> Δεδίδαχεν δὲ μαλιστα Ὅμηρος καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ψευδὴ λέγειν  
ὥς δεῖ. Poet. c. 24.



CHAP. represents them. It is, in thus diversifying

IX.

and enlarging the poem, beyond the spare and narrow thread to which such criticism would confine it, that consists, according to Aristotle, the *το ιδιον* and the *το αγαθον*<sup>1</sup> — the *peculiar privilege*, and *the excellence*, of epic poetry. As he elsewhere says, *ἐν μερος απολαβων* (*του πολεμου*), *ἐπεισοδιοις κεχρηται αυτων πολλοις* — “Homer, in selecting one circumstance of the “war, (for his *main argument*,) introduces “*various episodes*, drawn from circumstances “occurring in it.” The affecting interview of Hector and Andromache, the interesting mutual recognition of Diomedes and Glaucus, the nocturnal enterprise of Diomedes and Ulysses, and whatever else occurs of the same episodical character; which the declining criticism of the Alexandrian school, and the mistaken criticism of some learned moderns who listen to that school, view with suspicion, because they can trace no relation in them to a primary argument; are the proper and

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<sup>1</sup> See the next chapter.



genuine fruits of that privilege, and that excellence, which pertains to epic poetry. CHAP. IX. 

Nothing therefore can be more weak, or betray more evidently a defect of true critical acumen, than to conceive suspicion against any of those splendid parts, merely because they exhibit no direct relation to the primary argument. And if this would be false criticism, even if it were applied to the *true* argument; how greatly erroneous must it be, when they who employ it are mistaken in their conjecture of that argument, and assume in its place one entirely different, and altogether inadequate? All that is required in those episodical accretions is, that they be consistent with the circumstances of time and place; that they be conformable to the principles of nature; and introduced with art, with judgment, and with good taste. If they be so, the absence of sensible relation to the primary argument, only reveals the skill of the poet; and his more extensive knowledge of, and intimacy with, *the real world* in which



CHAP. he lived. To that *ignis fatuus*, which Wolfe  
IX.  has dignified with the style of the *altior critice*,  
we may, unconcernedly, abandon all suspi-  
cions so founded.  
The opinion, propounded by some of the  
latter Greek commentators; that the quarrel of  
Achilles and Agamemnon was itself a con-  
trivance of the divine will of Jupiter; would  
not affect the nature of the present argument.  
For, if the quarrel arose from a human cause  
alone; then the intervention of the divine will,  
*in consequence* of the occasion, will prove the  
irresistible power of the latter, as a matter  
of *fact* only. But, if the human agents  
were influenced to the quarrel by the will  
of Jupiter, then it will prove it as a  
matter of *design*, as well as of *fact*; but  
the mode of operation, and of proof, will  
be still the same in both cases. This latter  
notion, however, is manifestly false; and  
is the offspring of an age long posterior to  
Homer, and unimbued with his opinions in  
religion. The passage which I have above



quoted from the opening of the *Odyssey*,<sup>1</sup> CHAP.  
shows how jealous Homer was of any opinion, IX.  
that should charge upon the Deity the cause  
of human immorality. And, in the beginning  
of the *Iliad*, he has carefully precluded all  
ground for attributing to JUPITER the quarrel  
of the princes; by proposing the question  
himself, and expressly determining the primary  
cause to the avenging action of APOLLO.<sup>2</sup>  
That erroneous opinion has entirely resulted  
from the ancient corruption of the proëm, which  
has been already exposed; by which, the Διος  
βουλη has been forcibly associated with the  
μηνις Αχιλλεως,<sup>3</sup> instead of being left in its  
original and proper opposition to it.

And now I think that I have succeeded  
in establishing the three following propo-  
sitions:

<sup>1</sup> See p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> ΤΙΣ τ' ἀρ σφωε ΘΕΩΝ ἐριδι ξυνεηκε μαχεσθαι;

Δητους και Διος ὕτιος.

<sup>3</sup> P. 195 — 7.



CHAP.

IX.

1. That Aristotle *certainly recognised*, in the Iliad, a primary and governing argument, agreeing strictly with the rules of his *Poetics*, and yielding all the results which he has declared; although he has not stated, what that primary argument is.

2. That Aristotle, and the modern critics, *did not assume the same thing* for the primary argument of the Iliad, but *very different things*; inasmuch as that which has been assumed by the latter, is in direct contradiction to the rules of Aristotle, and yields contradictory results.

3. That the Iliad *manifestly displays a primary and governing argument*; the same in the narrative and in the proëm; which *entirely agrees with the rules of Aristotle*, and yields all the results which he has delivered.

It is a maxim in natural philosophy, that if a cause, assigned to an effect, can account for all its phenomena, and, at the same time, can remove all objections, it is to be admitted as the true cause of the effect in question. Upon the moral ground on which this maxim



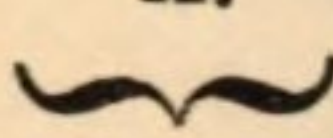
rests, I shall now not hesitate to conclude, CHAP.  
IX.  
finally;

*That* THE PRIMARY ARGUMENT *displayed*  
*in the ILIAD, which agrees with all the rules*  
*and all the results of Aristotle, and which we*  
*have been engaged in considering, is THE IDEN-*  
*TICAL ARGUMENT which was contemplated by*  
*that great philosopher; and, that it is THE TRUE*  
*PRIMARY ARGUMENT, originally designed by*  
*HOMER.*



## CHAPTER X.

OF THE LENGTH OF THE ILIAD; AND ITS JUSTIFICATION BY  
ARISTOTLE.

CHAP. <sup>X.</sup>  HAVING arrived at the preceding conclusion, I should now take leave of Aristotle altogether; were it not, that some critics have imagined, that they have discovered in his poetics a censure of *the length* of Homer's epic poems, which might be brought in aid of the arguments that I have combated. Wolfe acknowledges, "that it is a question particularly  
" favourable to his arguments; and that it  
" opens a way to many *conjectures* tending  
" to benefit his system, though he had not  
" leisure to pursue it."<sup>1</sup> That censure, how-

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<sup>1</sup> Quod quidem argumentationibus nostris accommodatissimum esset.—Hic autem ad *conjecturas* confugere, etsi summæ rei nostræ profuturas, non vacat. Prol. ad Hom. p. 111. not.



ever, is so entirely imaginary, that it is only CHAP.  
 matter for surprise, that the passage in which X.  
 it is supposed to exist, could ever have  
 received such an interpretation from learned  
 scholars.

In the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Poetics*, Aristotle, in comparing epic and tragic poetry, expresses himself thus, with respect to the former:

Διαφέρει κατὰ τε τῆς συστάσεως το μήκος ἢ ἐποποιΐα, καὶ το μέτρον. Του μὲν οὖν μήκους, ὅρος ἱκανὸς ὁ εἰρημένος· δυνασθαὶ γὰρ δεῖ συνορασθαὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸ τέλος. Εἴη δ' ἂν τοῦτο, εἰ τῶν μὲν ἀρχαίων ἐλαττοὺς αἱ συστάσεις εἶεν· πρὸς τε τὸ πλῆθος τῶν τραγωδιῶν, τῶν εἰς μίαν ἀκροασιν τιθεμένων, παρηκοίεν. ἔχει δέ, πρὸς τὸ ἐπεκτείνεσθαι τὸ μέγεθος, πολὺ τι ἢ ἐποποιΐα ἰδίον· διὰ το, ἐν μὲν τῇ τραγωδίᾳ, μὴ ἐνδεχέσθαι ἅμα πραττομένα πολλὰ μιμῆσθαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς, καὶ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, μέρος μόνον. Ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐποποιΐᾳ, διὰ τὸ διηγήσιν εἶναι, ἐστὶ πολλὰ μέρη ἅμα ποιεῖν περαινόμενα· ὑφ' ὧν, οἰκείων ὄντων, αὐξεται ὁ τοῦ ποιήματος ὄγκος. Ὡστε τοῦτ' ἔχει τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἰς μεγαλοπρέπειαν, καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλειν τὸν ἀκουόντα, καὶ ἐπεισοδίου ἀνομοιοῖς ἐπεισοδίοις. Τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον ταχὺ πληροῦν, ἐκπίπτειν ποιεῖ τὰς τραγωδίας.



CHAP.

X.

I am perfectly at a loss to conceive, how it is possible to read this passage with attention, and without any *previous bias* on the mind, and yet to understand it as implying any *censure* of the lengths of the Iliad and Odyssey; or as intimating, that Aristotle was of opinion, that epic poems would be improved by being reduced from the lengths of those ancient epopœas; or, as containing any thing else, than a distinct *justification* of the ancient lengths. Yet Twining so understands the passage, with other learned critics who preceded him; and he accordingly endeavours to ascertain the precise length, which he conceives Aristotle would propose to substitute for the lengths of the ancient epopœas. And he lays it down, as a point of fact; that, whereas the Iliad now consists of about 15.000 lines, and the Odyssey of about 13.000, Aristotle here proposes, to limit epic poems in general to about 7000 lines.<sup>1</sup> Pye has translated the original to the same

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<sup>1</sup> Twining's Aristotle, p. 478.



purport. But Wolfe very fairly acknowledges; CHAP.  
 “ that there are some things, which render their X.  
 “ interpretation of the passage *doubtful* — inter-  
 “ pretationem illius loci *dubiam* faciunt.<sup>1</sup>” Da-  
 cier saw no way of evading that interpretation,  
 but by a bold assertion; that those two poems  
 do not exceed the length, which Aristotle  
 intended to prescribe in this supposed rule.

And yet, after all those learned difficulties,  
 what does Aristotle say in this tortured pas-  
 sage? “ The epopœa *differs from* tragedy,  
 “ both with respect to *the length* of the com-  
 “ position, and to *the metre*. Now, the rule  
 “ for *length*, which has been prescribed for  
 “ the latter, is equally proper for the former;  
 “ namely, *that we ought to be able to connect,*  
 “ *in one view, both the beginning and the end.*  
 “ This, however, might be the case, if such  
 “ compositions were shorter than the ancient  
 “ ones; and were reduced to *the measure* (i. e.  
 “ *the length*) of those tragedies, which are made  
 “ to be heard at *one audience*, or sitting. But,

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<sup>1</sup> Twining's Aristotle, p. 478.



CHAP. “ the epopœa possesses *a power of extending its*

X.

“ *length, which is peculiar to itself*; for, tragedy  
 “ may not represent many things performed at  
 “ the same time, but only that thing which per-  
 “ tains to the present scene and characters;  
 “ whereas, the epopœa, being of the nature of  
 “ *a narrative*, has the power of representing  
 “ many things transacted at the same time;  
 “ by means of which peculiar faculty, the  
 “ bulk of the poem will be enlarged. So  
 “ that it has *this advantage*, with respect to  
 “ magnificence; that it can both carry the  
 “ auditor from one place to another, and can  
 “ introduce, *by the way*, subjects distinct from  
 “ the main subject. For, the satiety which  
 “ is soon created by uniformity, causes many  
 “ tragedies to fail.”

This is the genuine and simple import of this passage; from whence it is evident, that Aristotle designed to *justify*, not to *condemn*, the lengths of the ancient epopœas. That he did not mean to require *equality of length*, in epic poems and tragedies, is manifest; from his stating as an axiom, that *they differ with*



*respect to length.* It is manifest also, from CHAP. X, *the cause* which he assigns for that difference; namely, the το ἰδίον—the *peculiar and exclusive property*, or *power*, of the former. And, that he did not regard it as *a fault* or *blemish*, is equally manifest; from his entitling that peculiar property, το ἀγαθόν—its *advantage*, or *excellence*; and from his representing that excellence to consist in its faculty, of enlarging the bulk of the poem, and of acquiring magnificence by means prohibited to tragedy. In this passage, therefore, it was his design to show; *that the epopœa may legitimately extend itself to a length, to which tragedy may not extend.* Nor does he otherwise express a preference of tragedy to epic poetry, than by stating, what every one is sensible of; that the μίμησις, *imitation* or *representation* of a particular action, in a tragedy, is more perfect, that is, more resembling a real scene, and therefore more striking, than it can be rendered in an epic poem. But he does not, therefore, postpone the latter to the former in the ranks of poetry. He regards it, as the author of the former; and, as such, he assigns to it the priority of rank.



CHAP. For he says: λεγωμεν, αρξαμενοι κατα φυσιν, πρωτον  
X.

απο των πρωτων. ΕΠΟΠΟΙΙΑ δη και η της τραγωδιας  
ποιησις, επι δε κωμωδια και η διθυραμβοποιητικη.<sup>1</sup>

There is another error in the interpretation of this passage; which is, the understanding the word *πληθος*, with the sense of *number*; and the rendering the words, *ει των μεν αρχαιων ελαττους αι συστασεις ειεν προς τε το πληθος των τραγωδιων, των εις μιαν ακροασιν τιθεμενων, παρηκοιεν*: to signify, “ if the epic poem were reduced “ from its ancient length, so as not to exceed “ that of *such a number* of tragedies as “ are performed *successively* at one hearing.”<sup>2</sup>

For, *πληθος* has also the sense of *modus* — *measure*; in which sense Aristotle uses it elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> and which is its proper meaning in this place, where he only employs it as another term for the *μηκος* — *length*, of which he is actually speaking. What is introduced of *number*, and *succession*, is totally alien, both from the

<sup>1</sup> Poet. c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Twining.

<sup>3</sup> *πληθος ταττειν* — *modum imponere*: Politic. v. Lex. Gr. Steph.



text and the subject. Yet, from this forced CHAP.  
X.  
interpretation have arisen all the subtle inventions devised for the purpose of explaining it; concerning the *Tetralogiæ*, or chain of tragedies acted successively after each other: of which it is at the same time confessed, that we have no evidence whatever.

When Aristotle employs the phrase, “tragedies made to be heard *at one audience*,” I conceive, that he only uses a periphrasis signifying, “the *shortest* tragedies.” From which phrase I infer; that, in the infancy of the drama in Greece, as in modern Europe, some tragedies were divided into two or more parts, to be heard at two or more audiences. Aristotle, indeed, almost expressly signifies this to have been the case, when he says; “the proper length for the story of a tragedy should be confined to the revolution of one day, or very little more. The Epopœa is *unlimited* in time, in which it differs from the other; *though, at first, the time of tragedies and epic poems were equally unlimited.*” — ἡ δὲ ἐποποιΐα, ἀόριστος τῷ



CHAP. χρονῶ — καὶ τοὶ τὸ πρῶτον ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς τραγῳδίαις

X.

τὸν τοῦτο ἐποιοῦν, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐπεσὶ.<sup>1</sup> And this will

appear the more probable, when we recollect; that tragedy derived its origin from the recitation of portions of the Iliad and Odyssey in the public assemblies, at different audiences, in which the reciter, denominated *rhapsodist*, personated the characters in the parts which he rehearsed; from whence the first tragedies consisted of only one dramatic character, until Æschylus added a second, and afterwards Sophocles a third. “For tragedy,” as Aristotle relates, “advanced *gradually* towards “perfection; and, after various changes, re-  
“posed at length in the completion of its  
“proper form,”<sup>2</sup> which confined it to one audience. And he reasons thus: “a con-  
“nected view of the beginning and end,  
“which I have assigned as *a rule for length* in  
“tragedy, might indeed be obtained in epic  
“poems, εἰ ἐλαττοῦς εἶεν — if they *were less* than  
“the ancient epopœas, and not longer than

<sup>1</sup> Poet. c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ib. c. 4.



“ our shortest tragedies. But, epic poetry is CHAP.  
 “ not confined to such narrow limits as tra- X.  
 “ gedy; for it possesses a *peculiar faculty*,  
 “ resulting from its nature of *a narrative*,  
 “ which *entitles it* to give considerable mag-  
 “ nitude and extension to its bulk, *beyond*  
 “ *the limits of tragedy*; provided only, that  
 “ it neglect not the indispensable condition,  
 “ of preserving a sensible and comprehensible  
 “ relation between the beginning and the end.”

This is the whole of his doctrine in this passage; and I trust, that I have now satisfactorily shown, that no condemnation of the lengths of the Iliad and Odyssey can be elicited from it, if properly understood; but, on the contrary, that Aristotle's justification of their *lengths*, is now equally confirmed with the truth of his testimony, of the *unity* and *entireness* of both the poems.



## CHAPTER XI.

OF THE VISIONARY AND DELUSIVE SYSTEMS LATELY DEVISED,  
RESPECTING THE COMPOSITION OF THE ILIAD.—CONCLUSION.

CHAP. FROM the demonstrated unity of the produc-  
 XI. tion, I infer the unity of the mind which pro-  
 duced it, and consequently, that of the author  
 who possessed that mind; and I think it reason-  
 able to believe, upon the general testimony  
 of early antiquity, that the author bore the  
 name of HOMER, and that he was by birth  
 an Asiatic Greek, a native of Ionia, or Mæonia.  
 I am well aware, how offensive this pro-  
 fession of faith is to the *altior critice* of the  
 Wolfian school; but I console myself, with  
 the consciousness of its strict conformity to  
 the school of reason and of nature:

Non ego sidereas affecto tangere sedes.

I trust, that I have effectually vindicated the  
 Iliad, from the charge of exceeding, in length,  
 the measure prescribed by its primary argu-



ment; and that I have established the perfect CHAP.  
 concord of the principles of its construction, XI.  
 with the rules deduced from them by Aristotle.  
 If I have done this, I must necessarily, by  
 the same operation, have withdrawn the basis  
 upon which Wolfe, and Heyne, and some  
 other learned and ingenious critics, rested  
 their speculations, when they pronounced the  
 last books of the Iliad to be spurious; and  
 when they proceeded to erect, upon that only  
 foundation, a scheme of extirpatory criticism,  
 despoiling Homer (as I have already said)  
 of his poem, his fame, and his existence.  
 The ground, however, of all that superstruc-  
 ture being dissolved, the mass of the fabric  
 which it sustained must, of necessity, fall  
 with it;

Nec quo sustineatur habet:

so that I am relieved from the laborious obli-  
 gation of combating its several parts, separately  
 and successively. I shall, nevertheless, employ  
 a little time in examining the chief of those



CHAP. parts; in order to show, that they consisted  
XI. of materials as little substantial as their  
base.

When the learned Wolfe, following his predecessors, had assumed *the anger of Achilles* for the primary argument of the *Iliad*; and when his reason had distinctly perceived, that the length of the poem exceeded the compass of that argument; a new world of adventure seemed to open upon his imagination. Instead of scrutinizing, or questioning, the cause of that disparity, he hailed it as pregnant with a conclusion to which his mind appears to have been strongly pre-disposed; namely, that the poem, as we possess it, bears manifest tokens of the workmanship of different hands; and, therefore, that it is not *one original poem*, but an aggregation, or concatenation of several independent poems, which have been joined together, and articulated with so much skill and ingenuity, by a later hand, as to exhibit the form and semblance of *a one original poem*. The rapidity of his progress in this mental



excursion, is betrayed by himself. He first CHAP.  
lays down the position, that, in the introductory XI.  
argument of the Iliad, “ *every thing relates to the*  
“ *anger of Achilles — omnia ad iram Achillis*  
“ *relata;*” and he then affirms, “ that it never  
“ *can be shown* by sound reasons, that the  
“ proëm, which declares that argument, pro-  
“ mises more than eighteen books;”<sup>1</sup> for,  
“ that it has *not yet been proved*, by any rule,  
“ that there is any special reason, *why* the  
“ Iliad ends with the funeral of Hector.”<sup>2</sup>

These positions, the error of which has been fully exposed in the preceding chapters, constitute the sole basis of the system which his imagination proceeded to erect; and which he introduced in the following manner: “ There  
“ were formerly philosophers, who taught; that

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<sup>1</sup> *Nunquam* certis argumentis docebitur, septem illos versus quidquam ultra promittere quam xviii. rhapsodias. Prol. p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> De Iliade non demonstrant ex regulis suis, *cur* ea potissimum in tumultuaria descriptione Hectorei funeris terminetur. Ib. p. 136.



CHAP. “ the system of this universe was not formed  
XI. “ by a divine mind and power, but that its  
“ parts were united and compacted by accident  
“ or chance. I have *no fear*, that any one  
“ will accuse *me* of a similar temerity, if I  
“ find myself brought *by tokens apparent in*  
“ *the Iliad, and by other weighty reasons*, to  
“ a persuasion; that Homer was not the  
“ artificer of those bodies of poetry, (*the*  
“ *Iliad and Odyssey*,) but that the con-  
“ trivance of their structure was a work of  
“ after ages; and that it was not accom-  
“ plished at once, and by one chance, since  
“ *we find* the genius of many ages, and of  
“ many persons, concerned in effecting it.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet, there were strong reasons for apprehending the accusation, which the fascination of hypothesis would not allow Wolfe to anticipate; as Mr. Knight soon after emphatically proved. “ Those persons,” says this more sober critic, “ have been deservedly accounted  
“ daring and rash, who maintained, that the

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<sup>1</sup> Prol. p. 134.



“ universe derived its origin from a for- CHAP.  
 “ tuitous concourse of atoms; yet they are XI.  
 “ perhaps entitled to some indulgence, be-  
 “ cause no one was able to assign a more  
 “ probable cause of things of the nature  
 “ of which all were equally ignorant; and  
 “ where there is no resource but in con-  
 “ jecture, all have an equal right to employ  
 “ it. But, that the composition of poems,  
 “ in which, according to the most skilful  
 “ judges, every kind of eloquence is peculiar  
 “ and transcendent, and the artifice of arrange-  
 “ ment far superior to that of every other work  
 “ of human genius, should owe its origin to  
 “ a similar effect of *chance*; is a proposition,  
 “ against which not reason merely, but the  
 “ common sense and experience of mankind,  
 “ loudly exclaims.”<sup>1</sup>

The great principle of this system is; that the different parts of the *Iliad* had separate and distinct existencies, before they were united in that form, to which the title of *Iliad* has been

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<sup>1</sup> Knight. Prol. ad Hom. c. 10.



CHAP. given. Heyne, who professes that he fol-  
 XI.  
 lowed in the path in which Wolfe had pre-  
 ceded him, thus solemnly proposes the ques-  
 tion: “*Extiteritne hæc compages partium, ante*  
*partes; an partes extiterint priusquam in com-*  
*pagem coagmentatae fuerint?*”<sup>1</sup> — Did the parts  
 exist united, before they existed separately;  
 or, did the parts exist separately, before they  
 were combined into one body? And he comes  
 to this conclusion; “that the probability is,  
 that there existed, originally, many very  
 ancient separate poems, which had acquired  
 the general name of *rhapsodies*; the entire  
 series of which were afterwards connected,  
 by the industry of some ingenious person, in  
 one corporate form. — It may therefore have  
 happened, says he, and it is probable that  
 it did so happen; that, when a considerable  
 number of such poems, on the same common  
 subject on which the *Iliad* treats, had sub-  
 sisted separately through many ages, and  
 had been rendered familiar by frequent

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<sup>1</sup> Knight, Tom. viii. p. 802.



“ recitations, some genius more happily gifted CHAP.  
 “ than the rest — *ingenium aliquod felicius*, con- XI.  
 “ trived at length to harmonize the greater  
 “ part of these into the *one body* which we  
 “ now possess. — And indeed, he adds, it  
 “ was the work of a *great genius*, both to dis-  
 “ cern that so many poems possessing a  
 “ kindred argument *might be combined* into  
 “ one body, and also *to accomplish* the com-  
 “ bination with such admirable skill, as to  
 “ make it appear the production of one birth,  
 “ and not a compound fabrication. — Where-  
 “ fore, he concludes, *let this pre-eminent ge-*  
 “ *nius, to whom we are indebted for this won-*  
 “ *derful combination of art, BE OUR HOMER!*  
 “ — *jam ingenium illud præclarum, cui com-*  
 “ *pagem hanc tam miræ artis debemus, NOBIS*  
 “ *HOMERUS ESTO!*”<sup>1</sup>

This is that grand hypothesis, which so powerfully fascinated the minds of Wolfe and of Heyne, by the unbounded latitude which it seemed to open for the exercise of learned

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<sup>1</sup> Tom. viii. p. 805, 6.



CHAP. XI. adventure, and by the emancipation which it

appeared to afford them from the restraint of Aristotle's rules; that, instead of warily examining the tenure of their new property, or the title of their new freedom, they only exerted themselves to collect whatever testimonies they could gather from without, that might seem to favour their sanguine persuasion of the security of both. Heyne, indeed, expressly disclaims all desire of innovating, and all passion for paradox;<sup>1</sup> and we must believe, that he had so persuaded himself. "But," as Mr. Knight has pertinently remarked, "when the mind is once affected with a lust of believing or not believing, there is nothing which it cannot believe or disbelieve, provided only that it can find specious reasons. And the more eminently any one is endowed with strength of genius and store of learning, the more eagerly will he embrace the opinions which he has once taken up; and with the greater apparatus of learning, and

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<sup>1</sup> Tom. viii. p. 776.



CHAP. XI.  
 “pertinacity of defence, will he maintain  
 “them against the common sense of all  
 “mankind. From whence it often happens,  
 “that the most favourite opinions of philo-  
 “sophers are subjects of ridicule to the  
 “common mass; and that Plato, Zeno, Berke-  
 “ley, Hume, &c. have treated, with gravity,  
 “subjects which every common person in  
 “the street is justly entitled to laugh at. I  
 “profess myself to be a man of this common  
 “sort; and that, in a subject of criticism,  
 “I employ no extraordinarily exquisite acute-  
 “ness of genius, but only that common sense  
 “which is the endowment of every man.”<sup>1</sup>

With the same dignity of sound reason and unsophisticated learning, Clarke had before replied to the early, but more temperate, precursors of that hypothesis. “There have been those,” says he, “who have thought that Homer did not originally deliver his poems as entire books, but as scattered and separate songs. — But the fact itself

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<sup>1</sup> Prol. ad Hom. c. 27.



CHAP. “ positively contradicts the supposition; for,

XI.

“ in each poem, every thing is so exactly  
 “ correspondent and connected throughout,  
 “ from the beginning to the end; in the  
 “ Odyssey, there is such unity and continuity  
 “ in the narrative; in every book, and almost in  
 “ every page of the Iliad, every battle fought,  
 “ every circumstance related, is inserted with  
 “ such singular artifice, and *Achilles is every*  
 “ *where rendered so prominent to the view*, that  
 “ it is, evidently, quite impossible but that the  
 “ poem must have been engendered in one  
 “ conception of the mind. ‘The poem of  
 “ ‘ the Iliad,’ as Eustathius justly pronounces,  
 “ ‘ is *one body*, perfectly connected and arti-  
 “ ‘ culated throughout.’ So that Homer did  
 “ not originally deliver those poems in separate  
 “ songs; but, after different parts had been  
 “ extracted from them, and had been variously  
 “ dispersed—(*διασπασμένα*, as Pausanias speaks,)  
 “ Pisistratus was the first who collected them  
 “ together again, and disposed them in the  
 “ order in which we now possess them.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note, to *ὑποθ.* of Il. i.



For my own part, I should almost as soon CHAP.  
XI.  
have entertained a supposition, that the first animal structure was formed by the adaptation of four quarters previously existing, as that the Iliad was formed by the conjunction of several loose songs originally composed without any design of connexion; but which, when afterwards applied one to the other, by some ingenious person, were found to constitute, accidentally, a miraculous unity of structure. The perfect symmetry and harmony of the composition, and the moral unity of the argument, renders the supposition scarcely less preposterous of the latter, than it would be of the former. Yet such is *the theory*, to which luxuriant learning, and an undisciplined action of the imagination, have driven some of the most valuable and most illustrious of scholars. It is absolutely *a theory*, because it is the pure offspring of two assumptions positively *theoretical*; viz. 1. That either *the anger of Achilles*, or *the prayer of Thetis*, is the governing argument of the Iliad. 2. That the Iliad *therefore* extends beyond the measure of its true



CHAP. and proper governing argument, because it  
XI. extends beyond the measure of *that anger*, or  
*that prayer*. For, if neither of these is the  
true governing argument, the poem will not  
therefore exceed its true argument, because it  
exceeds that which is not its true argument.  
The various apparatus of learning, which both  
Wolfe and Heyne have accumulated; and  
which only serves to encumber and confound  
a simple question; does not contribute to form  
any part of *the basis* of that theory; but is  
merely an assemblage of *collateral props*, brought  
together to buttress and uphold it. But the  
same sanguineness with which they first em-  
braced it, seduced them into a persuasion;  
that the authorities which they have amassed,  
have added substance and solidity to its founda-  
tion. Let us examine the efficiency of sup-  
port, which it derives from those auxiliary  
authorities.

Wolfe deemed it indispensably necessary  
to fortify his system, by calling in the evidence  
of *history*, to establish two particulars: 1. That  
Homer *did not commit his poems to writing*, but



delivered them to memory only, and oral tradition.<sup>1</sup> 2. That the poems ascribed to Homer, were committed to writing *for the first time* by Pisistratus,<sup>2</sup> who lived four hundred years after Homer. Could he establish these *two* points, it would follow, that we cannot speak with confidence of the genuineness of any poem attributed to Homer.

To clear his way to the first of these positions, he endeavours to prove, that no mention is made of alphabetic writing in the poems of Homer; in which opinion, he has certainly the judgment of many learned persons on his side. There are only two passages, on which a question could be raised upon this subject; both of which occur in the Iliad. The first,

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<sup>1</sup> *Homerum scriptura usum non fuisse in pangendis carminibus; eaque primo memoriter prodita in vulgus et propagata, postea litteris mandata hanc formam et tenorem adscivisse.* Prol. p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> *Pisistratum carmina Homeri primum consignasse litteris, et in eum ordinem redegissee, quo nunc leguntur.* Ib. p. 142.



CHAP. XI. is that in which the Grecian chiefs are represented to have inscribed their respective lots,<sup>1</sup> in order to decide which of them should undertake the single combat with Hector. But it is not necessary to suppose, that alphabetic characters were employed on that occasion; since any arbitrary marks would have equally served the purpose. There only remains, then, the celebrated *πινάξ πυκτός*, or *folded tablet*, sent from Prætus, king of Corinth, to Iobates, king of Lycia, by the hand of Bellerophon; and the *πολλὰ λυγρὰ θυμοφθορὰ σημάτα* — *the many sad and fatal characters*, inscribed on that tablet.<sup>2</sup> Wolfe thought, that those characters were not alphabetical; but that they were “certain  
“ *symbolical marks* used among kindred, by  
“ which they might mutually communicate  
“ the impressions of their minds on subjects  
“ of great importance, and which were *per-*  
“ *haps* invented in that age, when vengeance  
“ for slaughter and injuries was exercised with  
“ great ferocity.”<sup>3</sup> Heyne thought, that they

<sup>1</sup> Il. vii. 175.<sup>2</sup> Ib. vi. 168.<sup>3</sup> Prol. p. 86. not.



“ might have been *certain particular signs* CHAP.  
 “ *agreed upon between the parties*, by which it XI.  
 “ might be intimated, in what estimation the  
 “ messenger or bearer was to be held.”<sup>1</sup> And  
 Mr. Knight has adopted the latter opinion,  
 but without any discussion of the subject.<sup>2</sup>

Now, there is no evidence whatever, direct or indirect, that symbolical writing was ever used in Greece; the supposition is, therefore, entirely gratuitous and theoretical. It is no evidence that the characters were symbolical, that the words used by Homer will bear such an interpretation; for it is scarcely possible to speak poetically of alphabetical characters, otherwise than by a figure or periphrasis that shall be equally applicable to symbolical. Ovid employs a description similar to that used here by Homer; and which might, in a similar manner, be interpreted of symbolical writing, did we not certainly know that he intended alphabetical:

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<sup>1</sup> Hom. Tom. v. p. 221. <sup>2</sup> Knight. Prol. ad Hom. c. 56.



## CHAP.

## XI.

Ite hinc difficiles, funebria ligna, tabellæ,

Tuque negaturis cera referta notis.<sup>1</sup>

In the same manner, the passage in Homer contains, in itself, nothing that determines the interpretation to symbolical writing, rather than to alphabetical. If, then, we inquire, *why* Wolfe and Heyne determined the interpretation to the former rather than to the latter; we shall find, that it was not a belief, that alphabetic writing was *not known* or *used* in Greece at that early period, but only a persuasion, that it was then confined to *public inscriptions* on stone and brass;<sup>2</sup> and that, from a defect of convenient materials, it was not yet adopted into *private use*. And Wolfe moreover affirms, that “the life of man was “then so simple, that it had *nothing which* “*seemed very worthy of being written.*”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Amor. L. i. eleg. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Wolf. ib. p. 58. Heyne, T. viii. p. 812.

<sup>3</sup> Ut tum tempora erant, forsitan *sex sæculis* non potuerint ad effectum venire. Diu enim illorum vita et simplicitas



10 His position, that it would have required CHAP.  
XI.  
*at least six centuries* to pass from the practice  
 of engraving alphabetic characters on stone,  
 to that of letter-writing in its ordinary practice,  
 is too fanciful, and betrays much too partial  
 an attachment to his own hypothesis, to de-  
 mand a grave attention; even if it were as  
 certain as he assumes it to be, that the former  
 practice preceded the latter in the order of  
 time: which is far from being the case. For,  
 a knowledge of, and a familiarity with letters,  
 must have been acquired by the eye of an artist  
 on some plain surface, before he could have  
 been able to proceed to the mechanical process  
 of insculping them in stone.

But, if there is any ground for believing  
 that alphabetic writing had existence in  
 Greece, and was employed for *public pur-  
 poses*, in the age of Bellerophon; it is much  
 more reasonable to believe, that it was used  
 for *private purposes* also, than to search into

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*nihil admodum habuit quod scriptura dignum videretur.* Prol.  
 p. 58, 59.



CHAP. the imagination for a species of writing, of  
 .XI. which there exists no sort of evidence, that  
 it was ever used in Greece at all. Now, we  
 have an evidence (which Wolfe and Heyne have  
 entirely overlooked) that Sophocles not only  
 believed the life of man to have had matters  
 well worthy of being written, but which ac-  
 tually were written, in the very age of Bel-  
 lerophon; and, therefore, with sufficient ac-  
 commodation of materials. In his *Trachiniæ*,  
 he introduces Deianira thus addressing the  
 chorus of Trachinian Virgins;

ὁδὸν γὰρ ἡμὸς τὴν τελευταίαν ἀνάξ

ῶματ' ἀπ' οἰκῶν ἩΡΑΚΛΗΣ, τοτ' ἐν δομοῖς

ΛΕΙΠΕΙ ΠΑΛΑΙΑΝ ΔΕΛΤΟΝ ΕΓΓΕΓΡΑΜΜΕΝΗΝ

ΞΥΝΘΗΜΑΤ', αἷ μοι πρόσθεν οὐκ ἐτλη ποτὲ,

πολλὰς ἀγῶνας ἐξιὼν, οὐπὼ φράσαι. —

νὺν δ' ὥς ἐτ' οὐκ ὦν, εἶπε μοι λεχούς ὅτι

χρεῖν μ' εἰσθαι κτήσιν· εἶπε δ' ἦν τεχνόις

μοῖραν πατρώας γῆς διαίρετον νεμοί.<sup>1</sup>

When Alcides last

Forth on his journey went, he left behind



*An ancient scroll ; alas ! before that time*

In all his labours he did never use

To speak as one who thought of death, secure

Always he seem'd of victory ; but now

*This writing* marks, as if he were to die,

The portion out reserv'd for me, and wills

His children to divide the inheritance.

CHAP.

XI.

This notable record proves undeniably, that Sophocles believed alphabetic writing to have been in common civil use in Greece in the age of Hercules, and that there were interests at that time in private life, "*which were worthy of being written*," and therefore, that the requisite materials and implements were at hand for writing them. The *δελτος εγγεγραμμενη*, can admit of no other interpretation in the nomenclature of Sophocles, than that of *a written document* in its most ordinary sense; and we thus find him speaking of *a written will* in that age, with the same familiarity and confidence that we do at the present day. We have no ground whatever for impeaching Sophocles of anachronical error, in the date which he here assigns to the current use of writing; or for supposing, that he failed in observance of that obvious rule



CHAP. of reason, which enjoins — “*aut famam sequi,*  
 XI. “*aut sibi convenientia fingere.*” Now, the age  
 of Hercules, and the age of Bellerophon, were  
 one and the same; only the latter was of the  
 paternal generation, and the former of the  
 filial:

|             |          |             |
|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Bellerophon | Æneus    |             |
|             |          |             |
| Hippolochus | Tydeus   | Hercules    |
|             |          |             |
| Glaucus     | Diomedes | Tlepolemus. |

To enter further into this subject, would be  
 unsuitable to this discussion; enough has been  
 produced to render it evident that Wolfe  
 and Heyne have not succeeded in establishing,  
 that the *σηματα* of Prætus were not alpha-  
 betical characters; that the *πινὰξ πύκτος* was  
 not a proper epistle; and therefore, that allusion  
 is not made by Homer to alphabetic writing;  
 so long as this testimony of Sophocles re-  
 mains unconfuted.

Wolfe, however, so entirely persuaded him-  
 self of the certainty of the position which he  
 maintains, that he observes: “though Virgil  
 “does not follow the Homeric simplicity of  
 “nature in many things, but has dressed



“ up his poetry with more contrivances of CHAP.  
 “ art, yet *he never makes mention of writing,* XI.  
 “ or any thing relating to it, in his *Æneid*. He  
 “ has not indeed sufficiently guarded against  
 “ a slight error in *one place*, — *uno loco*, where  
 “ he makes the Sibyl *write characters and*  
 “ *names upon leaves*; iii. 443. vi. 74.”<sup>1</sup> Here  
 however are *two places*, instead of *one*; the  
 second of which is a warrant, that the first  
 was not written inadvertently. But we will  
 add still *a third*; which is conclusive, that  
 Virgil supposed writing to be in practice in  
 the age of the Trojan war. He makes Æneas  
 relate; when he was returning to his ship from  
 the shore of Actium, where he had landed;

Ære cavo clypeum, magni gestamen Abantis

Postibus adversis figo, et rem carmine signo:

“ ÆNEAS HÆC DE DANAIS VICTORIBUS ARMA.”<sup>2</sup>

I fix’d upon the temple’s lofty door

The brazen shield which once great Abas bore;

And grav’d the verse, which thus to Actium speaks:

“ THIS GAIN’D ÆNEAS FROM THE CONQUERING GREEKS.”

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<sup>1</sup> Prol. p. 92. not. <sup>2</sup> Æn. iii. 286.



CHAP. Here, he “*makes mention of writing*” plainly

**XI.** enough. It would be absurd to say, that Æneas wrote on a *brazen* shield, because writing had as yet found no materials to receive it except *brass* or *stone*. He inscribed the line on a shield, that he might leave behind him, both a trophy of his past achievements, and a *durable* record of his visit. The description therefore plainly shows; that Virgil supposed Æneas to exercise an art then in established usage, and with which he was well familiarized.

Wolfe now comes to his *first great historical proof*; viz. that Homer did not commit his poems *to writing*, but delivered them to memory only, and oral tradition.

To establish a fact of such vital importance to his theory, he is reduced to the mortifying necessity of coming down very low indeed in time, to find his first and only substantial evidence; for he is only able to discover it in the testimony of a learned *Jew*, of the *first century of the Christian era*. This learned Jew, Josephus, supplies him with



what he is constrained to call, “UNICA de CHAP.  
 “*hac quæstione auctoritas diserta*<sup>1</sup> — the ONLY XI.  
 “*express authority in this question.*” There is  
 certainly something very ill calculated to allure  
 a wary and scrupulous confidence, upon the  
 very face of this single authority; something,  
 that stirs in us a cautious suspicion, which  
 reason does not censure, but encourage. We  
 are solicitous to know, *why*, after a silence of  
 a thousand years, this evidence should occur,  
 for the *first time*, in a *Jew*; and a Jew of so  
 late a period, as the *first Christian century*?  
 We are desirous of being certified, that the  
 statement was in no degree influenced in that  
 Jew by a national pride or prejudice; con-  
 scious of the high antiquity of letters among  
 his own countrymen, and prone to give wel-  
 come to any reports tending to lower the  
 date of a similar culture in a heathen nation.  
 But, if we proceed to consult this authority in  
 the source to which we are referred;<sup>2</sup> we find,  
 that it is delivered in a declamation of angry  
 controversy with the Greeks. And yet it

<sup>1</sup> Prol. p. 77, 78.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. cont. Ap. i. c. 2.



CHAP. goes no further than to allege; that there was  
 XI. *much doubt and inquiry* — πολλή ἀπορία καὶ ζήτησις,  
 among some persons whom he does not specify, whether the generation of the Trojan war was acquainted with letters; and that *they say*, (i. e. one of the parties in this late dispute,) that Homer *did not leave his poems in writing* — φασιν, οὐδὲ ἐν γραμμασι τὴν αὐτοῦ ποιησὶν καταλιπεῖν. The fascination of system; and a strong sense of the want of some historical countenance and support; could alone have given to this species of testimony, the weight which it acquired in the mind of this learned dissertator.

He proceeds, nevertheless, with the same confidence, to his *second historical proof*, which he divides into two parts: viz. 1. that the poems ascribed to Homer were *committed to writing for the first time*, and 2. that they were *first reduced into the form in which they are now read*,—by Pisistratus. To prove these alleged facts, he solemnly appeals to the “concurring and universal voice of *all antiquity*, if we attend to *the sum of tradition*.” Yet, among all the authorities which he sum-



mons together as that “*voice of all antiquity*,” CHAP.  
there is *not one*, except the same learned, but XI.  
questionable Jewish authority, which speaks at  
all to the *first point* of this proof; the rest only  
testify to the *second* simple and probable fact,  
that Pisistratus collected the several portions of  
Homer’s poems dispersed in European Greece,  
and first digested them into their present  
forms: *i. e. at Athens*. This will be seen in  
his own note, which is therefore here sub-  
joined.<sup>1</sup> But, a passage which Wolfe cites

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<sup>1</sup> P. 142, 143. Nunc vero nihil opus est conjecturas ca-  
pere: *Historia loquitur*. Nam vox totius antiquitatis, et, si  
summam spectes, *consentiens fama* testatur, Pisistratum car-  
mina Homeri *primum consignasse litteris*, et, in eum ordinem  
redegisse quo nunc leguntur. — (Not.) Cic. de Orat. iii. 34.  
*Quis doctior iisdem illis temporibus, aut cujus eloquentia litteris  
instructior fuisse traditur, quam Pisistrati? qui primus Homeri  
libros, confusos antea, sic disposuisse dicitur, ut nunc habemus.*  
Pausan. vii. 26. p. 594. Πεισιστρατος επη τα ‘Ομηρου διεσπασ-  
μενα τε και αλλαχου μνημονευομενα ηθροιζετο. Joseph. c. Apion.  
i. 2. Φασιν, ουδε ‘Ομηρος εν γραμμασι την αυτου ποιησιν καταλιπειν,  
αλλα διαμνημονευομενην εκ των ασματων υστερον συντεθηναι, vide-  
licet a Pisistrato. Ælian. V. Hist. xiii. 14. ‘Υστερον Πεισιστρα-  
τος συναγαγων, απεφηνε την Ιλιαδα και την Οδυσσειαν. Liban.  
Panegy. in Julian. T. i. p. 170. Reisk. Πεισιστρατον επαινουμεν



CHAP. from the dialogue entitled *Hipparchus*, as-  
 XI. cribed to Plato, in support of his proof,  
 contains internal evidence directly contradic-  
 tory of it; for it says, that Hipparchus, the  
 son of Pisistratus, “first brought the poems  
 “of Homer into this country (sc. Athens.”)  
 πρῶτος ΕΚΟΜΙΣΕΝ ΕΙΣ τὴν γῆν ταυτηνι.<sup>1</sup> Now,  
 κομισαι εἰς, is only used in expressing the con-  
 veyance or transport of things real and material;  
 so that this record states, in fact, that the  
 poems of Homer, which Hipparchus brought  
 into Athens, were in an embodied and substantial  
 form; that is to say, they were in the form  
 of a written book, or volume. He was, therefore,  
 not the first to put them into that form; since  
 he obtained them in that form. Heyne would  
 raise a scruple and a difficulty with respect to

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ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν Ὀμηρῶ πεποιημένων συλλογῆς. Suidas, v. Ὀμηρος:  
 Ὑστερον συνετεθῆ και συνεταχθῆ ὑπο πολλῶν, και μαλιστα ὑπο  
 Πεισιστρατου, του των Αθηναίων τυραννου. Eustath. p. 5. Ὅτι  
 εἰν μὲν τὴ σῶμα συνεχὲς διόλου και ευαρμωστον ἡ τῆς Ἰλιάδος ποιη-  
 σις· οἱ δὲ συνθεμενοὶ ταυτην, κατ' ἐπιταγην, ὡς φασι, Πεισιστρατου —

<sup>1</sup> ὅς αλλα τε πολλὰ και καλὰ ἐργα σοφίας ἀπεδειξατο, και  
 τα Ὀμηρου πρῶτος ἐκομισε εἰς τὴν γῆν ταυτηνι. Plat. Hipparch.  
 p. 228. B.



the τα Ὀμηρου — *the poems of Homer*, mentioned in this passage: “nihil in his habetur *quænam* illa τα Ὀμηρου essent<sup>1</sup> — there is nothing here to tell us, *which poems* of Homer those were.” Had the Greek said, τινὰ Ὀμηρου — *some of the poems*, his scruple would have been reasonable; but since it says, τα Ὀμηρου — *the poems* of Homer, the proposition is general and without reservation, and consequently, the learned German’s difficulty is unreasonable and uncritical, frivolous and vexatious. It is plain enough, that the τα Ὀμηρου in the dialogue of the Hipparchus, means the same as the *Homeri libri* of Cicero; the ἐπη τα Ὀμηρου of Pausanias; the τα Ὀμηρου πεποίημενα of Libanius; and the Ἰλιάς καὶ Ὀδυσσεΐα of Ælian; in the preceding note quoted from Wolfe.

Such then is the whole efficiency of auxiliary support, which Wolfe’s theoretical system derives from the testimony of *historical* authority. He observes indeed, that the testimonies which he alleges are slight in them-

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<sup>1</sup> Tom. viii. 809.



CHAP. selves, considered separately; but that they  
 XI. produce a strong *compound* testimony, when they  
 are united. But here again he is in an error; for Josephus is, in fact and confessedly, his *single* and *only* express and positive authority, for proving *that Homer was ignorant of writing*.

The τα Ὀμηρεῶν, or *Poems of Homer*, which Hipparchus, son of Pisistratus, *imported into Athens*, according to the relation of the dialogue, were, therefore, *the Iliad and the Odyssey*, comprised in the form of a complete *codex* or *volumen*; and we can thus understand, *how* it came to pass, that he was enabled to connect, correct, and adjust the several parts of those poems which were already scattered in European Greece, and which he took the pains to collect, “into the order in which they are now read — *in eum ordinem redigisse quo nunc leguntur*.” This codex, which we may call *the Hipparchian manuscript*, became thus the first standard for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in Athens.

How long, before Hipparchus procured this copy, similar manuscripts existed in Ionia,



from whence it is most reasonable to suppose CHAP.  
XI.  
that Hipparchus procured his own, we have  
no clue to enable us to ascertain; consequently,  
we have no ground for fixing their origin to  
any particular date between Hipparchus and  
Homer; and, by further consequence, none  
for supposing, that they were not reduced  
into that form as early as Homer himself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The question of *the age of Homer*, is examined with the learning of a profound scholar, and with the judgment of a sound critic, by Mr. Mitford (Hist. of Greece, append. to chap. iv. vol. i. p. 166 — 170, 4to.); who fixes it to the ninth century before the Christian era, not long after the Trojan war, and prior to the return of the Heraclidæ; conformably to the chronology of Sir Isaac Newton. Gibbon (Miscell. Works, v. iii. p. 70,) opposed to that chronology a conceited and flippant objection, *in French*; written under a total ignorance, that the argument which he imagined to be so potent, and for which he plainly gave himself very considerable credit, had long before been buffeted aside by Barnes. Paterculus (l. i. c. 6.) had inferred, unskillfully, that Homer must have lived *long after the Trojan war*, because he describes the strength of the heroes of his poem to be such as could not be matched, οἱ οὖν βροτοὶ εἰσιν — *as men now are*. (Il. v. 304, xii. 383, 449, xx. 287.) This ob-



CHAP. For though their first introduction into *Athens*,  
 XI.  
 in a written form, may have been as late as the reign of Pisistratus; yet, as Heyne justly remarks, “I perceive a different face of things, “if I compare the situation and circumstances “of *Ionia*, during the same times. For in “Asia, and the adjoining islands, the most “illustrious geniuses, especially in poetry, “flourished before the times of the Pisi- “stratidæ.<sup>1</sup> — It appears probable, that the “practice of *writing* was of an earlier date “among *the Ionians*, from the earlier use

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servation crossing Gibbon in his reading, he flattered himself that he had made a discovery, which had eluded the notice of all the learned world. But Barnes (note, on Il. v. 304.) had already exposed the futility of this objection, by simply adducing the instance of Nestor (Il. i. 272.); who makes the same comparison, between the contemporaries of *his youth*, and those of *his old age*. For, if Homer deemed it consistent, that an individual should make this comparison between successive contemporaries of *his own life*; he might, with equal consistency, apply it to a generation which lived *no long time before himself*. See also Barnes's note, on Il. xii. 383.

<sup>1</sup> Tom. viii. p. 813.



“ τῶν διφθερῶν — of *parchments*, among them.”<sup>1</sup> CHAP.  
 Yet, from these sound observations, Heyne is XI.  
 suddenly drawn aside by his original theory;  
 and, instead of proceeding to the direct issue  
 to which they ought to have led him, he is  
 carried away into an oblique path, which be-  
 guiles him again into the wilderness of specu-  
 lation: “ I, *therefore*, think,” says he, “ that  
 “ the *rhapsodies*, (or the different *parts or books*  
 “ composing the poems of Homer,) *existed*  
 “ in writing in Ionia before the age of the  
 “ Pisistratidæ; but that they were *united into*  
 “ those forms, in that age.”<sup>2</sup>

We here perceive, how these learned theo-  
 rists were divided in opinion upon this im-  
 portant point of their theory. Wolfe supposed,  
 that those rhapsodies or songs, the combination  
 of which afterwards produced the Iliad and  
 Odyssey, existed in memory and tradition  
 only, until they were committed to writing,  
 for the first time, by or under Pisistratus;  
 whereas Heyne, on the contrary, supposed  
 that they had existed in writing, in Ionia,

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<sup>1</sup> P. 814. <sup>2</sup> Tom. viii. p. 815.



CHAP. XI. for an indefinite time before the age of Pisi-  
stratus. Thus, these two learned Germans walk by different paths, but it is still in the same common field of fallacy and error; an error, proceeding originally from the fanciful and gratuitous assumption, that the parts of the poem existed before the whole, that is, the four quarters before the corporate animal; and from a prepossession, that the poems were formed by a synthetical process, instead of the rhapsodies by an analytical. The sole cause of this theory, was their not discerning the *essential unity* of the poem; and the sole cause of their not discerning that unity, was their failing to apprehend *the primary argument*, by which alone that unity could be discerned. From false premises, they drew out probable conclusions, into the bulk of volumes. Those conclusions however, could only be probable *hypothetically*; on the supposition, that the premises were true. But, the premises having been demonstrated to be false, all the voluminous conclusions deduced from them, are demonstrated to be false also. Thus they have



undertaken an inverted (shall I say, or a per- CHAP.  
verted?) argument; which renders all the re- XI.  
condite learning which they have amassed to  
support it, tedious, and unavailing to the end  
for which they had destined it. And the  
cause of sound science now loudly demands,  
that an hypothesis so fallacious, and so per-  
nicious to the interests of true knowledge;  
especially in the age of youth, when the ima-  
gination is most fervid and most open to  
seduction; should be speedily brought to a  
kindred fate with that of "*the opinions of*  
"*Aristo, Pyrrho, and Herillus, which have*  
"*long since been exploded.*"<sup>1</sup>

I have not dwelt upon an inconsistency  
in the hypothesis, which must have been re-  
marked by the reader; that it sometimes  
supposes the Iliad to be a consarcination of  
different songs, by different poets, the con-  
sarcinator of which is entitled to all the  
praise hitherto lavished upon an imaginary  
*Homer*;<sup>2</sup> sometimes, that there was, originally,

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<sup>1</sup> Cic. Off. i. c. 2. <sup>2</sup> P. 290, 1.



CHAP. a genuine *Homeric nucleus*, but which has been  
 XI. encrusted, enlarged, and disfigured, by successive accumulations of foreign poetical matter.<sup>1</sup>

The learned M. Larcher, in his note upon that part of his Translation of the Life of Homer, commonly ascribed to Herodotus, in which the biographer supposes that Homer, during his travels, “*wrote memoranda*” of all he saw — εἶκος δὲ μιν ἢ καὶ μνημοσύνα πάντων ΓΡΑΦΕΣΘΑΙ; has the following remarks: “If  
 “ that was the case, as is very probable,  
 “ and, indeed, very difficult to doubt; what  
 “ becomes of the assertion of a learned writer,  
 “ who has lately pretended that Homer did  
 “ not write his poems, although the art of  
 “ writing was known some centuries before  
 “ the birth of that poet? A scholar so much  
 “ distinguished by the superiority of his erudition, ought to follow the high road of  
 “ learning; and leave all singular and whimsical opinions to those puny literatists, who  
 “ have no other means for making themselves

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<sup>1</sup> P. 46, 49, 54.



“ known. M. de Sainte-Croix has excellently CHAP.  
 “ refuted this literary *paralogism*, in one of XI.  
 “ our Journals. What would that illustrious  
 “ scholar and critic have said, if he had read  
 “ in the preface of *a great book, printed at*  
 “ *Halle, in Saxony, in 1796*, that there never  
 “ was such a person as Homer; and that the  
 “ Iliad is the work of various ancient poets,  
 “ whose detached poems have been collected  
 “ and tacked together? would he not think,  
 “ that the *spirit of vertigo* — *l'esprit de vertige*,  
 “ which has taken possession of France, has  
 “ begun to spread itself over a part of Ger-  
 “ many?”<sup>1</sup> He might have extended his re-  
 mark to England also, about the same period;  
 had not the fanciful suggestions of the learned  
 and venerable Jacob Bryant respecting Homer  
 and Troy, called forth an host of his own  
 countrymen to encounter them, and set them  
 to rest.

The whimsical opinions of the learned  
 Wakefield among ourselves, which were ex-

<sup>1</sup> Traduct. d'Hérodote. Tom. vi. p. 191. not. 6.



CHAP. pressed soon after the romantic system of  
XI. Wolfe had made its first appearance in the  
learned world, will require little more than  
to be stated, after what has already been  
discussed. “Let me give you in a few  
“ words,” says he, “an outline of *my theory*  
“ respecting Homer. — Now ὁμηρος (*homerus*) is  
“ an old Greek word for τυφλος, *blind*. I take  
“ *homerus*, then, to have originated in the  
“ peculiarity of a certain *class of men*, and  
“ not in that of *an individual*. That *bards*  
“ *were usually blind*, is not only probable from  
“ the account of Demodocus in the *Odyssey*,  
“ but from the nature of things. The *memory*  
“ of blind men, because of a less distraction  
“ of their senses by external objects, is pecu-  
“ liarly *tenacious*; and such people had no  
“ means of obtaining a livelihood but by  
“ *this occupation*. All this is exemplified by  
“ *fiddlers, &c.* at the present day. Now, *the*  
“ *Trojan war*, (the first united achievement  
“ of the Greeks) would of course have become  
“ a favourite topic with *this class of men*, who  
“ are known to have been *very numerous*.



“ Detached portions of *this event*, such as CHAP.  
 “ the Exploits of Diomedes, of Agamemnon, XI.  
 “ the Night Expedition, the Death of Hector,  
 “ his Redemption, &c. would be separately  
 “ composed and sung, as fitted by their  
 “ lengths, for the entertainment of a com-  
 “ pany at one time.”<sup>1</sup> It can hardly be ne-  
 cessary to point out to the observation of the  
 reader, the confusion of ideas which com-  
 poses the tissue of this theory; and which  
 proves, that extensive and minute erudition  
 does not necessarily engender a sound critical  
 judgment. The learned writer did not mean  
 to say, that bards and fiddlers are usually  
 blind, for we know that the great majority  
 of those practitioners are not blind; but,  
 that blind men usually apply themselves to  
 barding and fiddling; and for the reason which  
 he assigns, namely, the advantage they may  
 derive from the tenacity of their *memories*.

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence of the late G. Wakefield with the  
 Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox, in the years 1796-1801. Let.  
 ix. p. 27-30.



CHAP. But, *who composed* the poetry, and *who* the  
XI.  music, which these bards and fiddlers so tena-  
ciously retain? We expected to hear, of *the*  
*author* of a poem; and we are told, of a  
class of blind men *who retail his verses*. Or,  
did Wakefield mean to say, that *memory* is  
the faculty which produces poetry? or, that  
blindness alone, in calling forth the mechanical  
powers of the memory, necessarily calls forth  
*poetical genius* at the same time, as their in-  
separable adjunct? This is what his theory  
seems to suppose; for, his blind men, or  
his *homers*, appear both to have “*composed*  
“*and sung*” different portions of the fa-  
vourite topic of the Trojan war. But, if they  
were so “*very numerous*,” and if the topic  
was so “*favourite*,” whence did it happen;  
that although that war lasted *ten years*, yet  
all the events which Wakefield can recite as  
having engaged their partiality, are confined  
within the space of the *forty-two days*, elapsing  
between the first incensement of Achilles and  
the sepulture of Hector? “*These songs of*  
“*blind men*,” he proceeds, “*were collected*



“ and put together by *some skilful men*, (at CHAP.  
 “ the direction of Pisistratus, or some other XI.  
 “ person) and woven by interpolations, con-  
 “ necting verses, and divers modifications,  
 “ into *a whole*.” Here we find ourselves  
 brought again to the “ *ingeniosus rhapsodus*” of  
 Wolfe, and the “ *ingenium præclarum*” of  
 Heyne; whom we have already sufficiently  
 contemplated.

When we attentively consider these issues,  
 to which repletion of learning has urged some  
 of the first scholars; we cannot but feel the  
 force of the strong figure misapplied by Fes-  
 tus, τα πολλὰ σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρεπεί.<sup>1</sup>

But, the production of the *true primary*  
*argument* of the Iliad, reveals at once its  
 native *unity*, and the perfect *symmetry* of all  
 its component parts; and, by the same opera-  
 tion, dissipates every theory grounded upon  
 the gratuitous hypothesis, that it is destitute  
 of that unity and symmetry. The argument,  
 which had been perverted, becomes thus recti-  
 fied; and every part is seen to lie in its

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xxvi. 24.



CHAP. natural posture, order, and direction. All  
 XI.

~~~~~ becomes plain; and we discern the simple truth of the case, without labour and without contrivance; viz. That the *Iliad* was originally composed by its great author, in Ionia, to illustrate the sublime truth which it propounds, by means of a narrative of the deepest interest to his contemporary auditors: That, in a succeeding age, different portions of his extensive poem were introduced into European Greece, where they were occasionally recited, in the public assemblies, for the gratification of the people: That those who first recited them came from Ionia, and were denominated *rhapsodists*; as is to be inferred from the *Iων* of Plato, in which *the Ionian* and *the rhapsodist* is the same person; and that the portions which they recited, were called *rhapsodies*:<sup>1</sup> That those rhapsodies acquired, from this cause,

¹ The *ῥαψωδίαί*, were the *cantations* or *recitations* of the *ῥαψωδοί*, and were so denominated after them. The Greeks were divided in opinion, respecting the origin of the word *ῥαψωδός*; some deriving it from *ῥαπτειν*, to sew, others from *ῥαβδος*, the *wand* or *staff*, which the rhapsodists car-

detached and separate existences, and be- CHAP.
came dispersed in European Greece: While XI.
the entire poem, too long for any single re-
citation, was not introduced there, until Hip-
parchus, son of Pisistratus, procured a com-

ried in their hands; and the moderns have not been able to settle the difference between them. (Conf. Wolfe. Prol. p. 96. and Heyne. T. viii. p. 794.) The Greeks and Romans were bad etymologists, in consequence of the contempt they entertained for all foreign, or, as they called them, *barbarous* languages; which caused them to seek within their own tongues, for the origin of all words which they employed. In this state of uncertainty, we may be permitted to look, beyond their dialects, into that of another people with whom they were in frequent communion. The name of *rhapsodist*, was anciently applied to a *reciter of poetry*, whether the verses were his own, or those of another; “*qui suos versus recitat, et is qui aliorum recitat, uterque ραπτῳδος, et lenius ραψῳδος.*” — (Heyne. T. viii. p. 794.) Assuming then, that the Ionian *rhapsodists* introduced their denomination at an early age, together with their office, into European Greece; the following cursory suggestions arise.

The connexion, between Ionia and Egypt, was intimate. In which latter country, a colony of Ionians was established

CHAP. XI. plete copy, which he brought to Athens: By means of which standard, he was enabled to determine the just order, relation, and connexion, of the separate and scattered parts which he called in and collected: And to

in the reign of Psammitichus, nearly a century before Pisistratus; who instructed, in the Greek language, those Egyptians that served as interpreters to the Greeks who visited Egypt. (Herod. L. ii. c. 154.) Now, the Egyptian word for *αιιδος*, *cantor* — *a musician, singer, chaunter, or reciter*, was **PEΨΧΩ**; and, expressed by the confined powers of the Greek alphabet, and according to the Greek enunciation, *ραψω* or *ραψω* — *rhapso*. This word, which is a genuine Egyptian compound, is composed of the verb **ΧΩ** — *σω*, signifying, “*to tell, to relate, to chaunt, to sing* — also, *a hymn*.” (Woide, Lex. Ægypt. p. 169.): and, of the common formative prefix of Egyptian nouns, **PEΨ** — *PEΨ*, pronounced *ραψ*, (Woide, Gramm. Æg. p. 1.); of which, above an hundred and thirty examples may be examined, (Lex. p. 79–83.) — We meet with this word in the sense of *κιθαρωδης*, in the Egyptian version of Apoc. xviii. 22. *και φωνη των ραψω, και μουσικων, και αυλητων*: and in the sense of *μουσικοι*, in Dan. iii. 5. *οταν ηκουον οι λαοι της φωνης — της κιθαρας — και παντος γενοους των ραψω*. If we possessed the whole of the Egyptian scriptures in print, we should doubtless be able to multiply examples; thus much how-

which standard, it is very possible, that we CHAP.
may owe the Iliad and Odyssey, as we now XL
possess them. 

But, in those partial recitations of the Iliad in European Greece, we are able to trace and detect the early cause, which eventually occasioned the loss of the true primary argu-

ever, is certain, that $\rho\epsilon\psi\chi\omega$ — $\rho\alpha\phi\sigma\omega$, i. e. $\rho\alpha\psi\omega$, signified in the Egyptian language, *the performer* or *doer* of the several actions denoted by the verb $\chi\omega$ — $\sigma\omega$. The subjunction of an inflective termination to that exotic form, conformably to the genius of the Greek tongue, was alone requisite to produce the word $\rho\alpha\psi\omega\delta\omicron\varsigma$. This word, once adopted by the Ionians in their commerce with Egypt, and by them introduced into European Greece, would soon, though a foreign and a compound word, be illiterately referred, in the latter country, to the simple vernacular thema, $\rho\alpha\psi\alpha\iota$; and deductions would be drawn from it accordingly. We should presently hear of $\rho\alpha\psi\alpha\iota$ $\omega\delta\eta\iota$, as the proper solution of the word; and next, of $\rho\alpha\psi\alpha\iota$ $\epsilon\pi\eta$. A sense of *sewing*, would be erroneously annexed to $\rho\alpha\psi\omega\delta\omicron\varsigma$; to the supercession of its primitive sense, and to the introduction of interpretations totally unfounded. And thus, the *cantation* or *recitation* of Homer's poems, would at length become transformed into their *consarcination*.

CHAP. XI. ment. Letters had flourished in Asiatic Greece, long before they were cultivated in the European; and the first acquirement of literature in the latter country, was nearly coeval with its loss in the former. It was before letters were cultivated in European Greece, that the poetry of Homer was introduced into that country, by the itinerant rhapsodists from Ionia. Their division of the poem into portions, each of which, as Aristotle says, “has its own subject and magnitude,” tended to draw the mind away from the general pervading argument of the whole, and to fix it upon the interests of the subordinate parts; especially, as it is probable that the entire poem was seldom followed by individuals in its continuity. Thus, erroneous impressions would be popularly received of the design of the poem. Whatever most strongly affected the senses and the passions of an unpolished and unlettered people, would acquire a surreptitious priority in their estimation; and whatever was to be apprehended only by the moral and intellectual faculties, would be

proportionably neglected. So that at length, CHAP.
“ *the anger of Achilles and its terrific effects,*” XI.
which first presented itself to their ears and
imaginings, became established as the chief
subject of the poem. From a public opinion
thus early and erroneously formed, and per-
manently fixed in European Greece, in the
infancy of letters; the succeeding ages, which
received their knowledge and notions from
thence, derived also their impressions of the
design of the poems of Homer. The case
would, probably, have been very different;
had Ionia been able to transmit to us, by a
direct course, the sentiments which were
there entertained, of the nature and object
of Homer’s poems. But, as Heyne remarks;
“ there is no nation of whom we have such
“ scanty information as of the Ionians, espe-
“ cially in the early times of their arts and
“ learning. — We are totally ignorant, what
“ became of their written books; whether
“ they survived to the time of Plato, or of
“ Alexander, or whether any were preserved
“ in the library of Alexandria. — It is mani-

CHAP. “fest, that the monuments of genius perished
XI. “early in Asia and the islands; and that
“those which escaped, were preserved by
“being carried into European Greece.¹”
Thus, we have received the poems of Homer circuitously, through another people of Greece; and accompanied by the national impressions of that other people. The original auditors of Homer in Asia, and the auditors of his succeeding rhapsodists in Europe, would have received very different impressions of the primary argument of his Iliad; and it would only have been by an attentive application of the mind to the poem, after it was possessed in its entirety, that the European Greek would at length have been able to discover the error of the general opinions, and to trace out and ascertain its true argument. In doing this, few probably engaged or few succeeded; for, besides Aristotle, few appear to have been clearly sensible of the *unity of action* upon which the Iliad is founded; and Heyne

¹ T. viii. p. 814.

has observed, that few after Aristotle followed CHAP.
XI.
in his steps. When, in the process of ages, changes in language and customs, and diversity of traditions, had rendered the text of Homer an object of various and curious research to the scholar and the antiquary; learned persons, (remaining contented with the prevailing notions respecting the general argument,) applied themselves to a minute investigation of those several multitudinous particulars, rather than to a simple and reflective contemplation of the whole.

But, a very serious evil resulted, from this active exercise of ingenuity upon a poem of which the presiding argument was unperceived; yet the knowledge of which was indispensably necessary, as the test by which to decide on the value of the criticisms: more especially, where the avowed ground of the judgments given, is the relation which the passages in question bear to that presiding argument. We must be sensible, how erroneous and fallacious such judgments must be. From not discerning *the uniting principle* of

CHAP. the poem, it was assumed, that its parts were
XI.  destitute of such a principle. Under that error, caution was cast aside; and conjectural adventure deemed itself at liberty to indulge its exercise upon the poems of Homer, with a latitude subject to no control, and amenable to no jurisdiction; until, in its wantonness, it at length ceased to recognize, either *an Iliad*, or *an Homer*.

There is, however, an ample field for learning and criticism to unfold their powers, in this great poem, without attempting to rob the first and greatest of poets of his property and his honours; and without endeavouring to stultify the belief of nearly three thousand years, in order to obtain prominence for one's own particular sagacity: as might have been abundantly proved by the eminent scholars themselves, against whose visionary and delusive hypotheses alone, I venture to oppose myself. Every nation has its own peculiar character; and, as learning has always honourably and eminently distinguished the German nation, so likewise, it must fain be confessed, has a cer-

tain propensity to theoretical novelty and paradox. Let us uphold simple and established truths; and not seek in invention, what can be found in fact. Let us endeavour, by sobriety of learning, to restrain and moderate the excesses of speculative erudition elsewhere; and to keep clear and unincumbered, the broad and open way of genuine criticism. The poems of Homer have no doubt sustained various alterations and depravations, during the ages of their existence; as have likewise our own sacred books. Let us apply ourselves, to correct the imperfections and defects of the former, with the same cautious reserve, and the same severe scruple, which we employ in purifying the latter: but let us not introduce the temerity of heresy, as a principle of classical criticism, nor resort to the desperate resource, of making every thing give way to the rule of our own actual ignorance upon particular points. For, much is true and real, of which we may entertain doubts; much is sincere and genuine, of which we can adduce no proof. We have only to examine some

CHAP.

XI.

CHAP. of the passages, upon which the Alexandrian
 XI.

critics of old, and Wolfe and Heyne in the present age, have affixed their stigmas of reprobation, to be sensible of the necessity of this cautious procedure. For, it is impossible to concur in the judgments which they have pronounced against many particular passages; and, if an arbitrary licence of operating were to be conceded to criticism, half of Homer's genuine growth might be lopped away from its stock,

si prava libido

Fecerit auspicium.

It may be justly questioned, whether Homer has not sustained much more injury from erasure and rejection, than from interpolation. It is more probable, that a fastidious and incompetent judgment should have discharged genuine passages from the text; than that an audacious invention, should have incorporated new matter into it. Several lines are quoted by ancient writers, which are now not found in the text of Homer; and there

can be little doubt, that the loss of those lines has been owing to the vanity of settling the text by individual decision. It will be said, that if no interpolations had been discovered, criticism would have had no motive for suspecting and questioning the text; but I answer, that the discovery of one or two trifling alterations of the text, would have been quite sufficient to set all the heads at Alexandria to work; and to give rise to a new scheme of busy, pruning criticism, which, aided by self-applause, and encouraged by facility, would erase or reject an hundredfold more than the quantity of depravation which gave origin to the operation. There is reason to believe, that if all the celebrated ἀθετούμενα, or *rejected passages* of the Alexandrian censors, were to be collected together, they would form no very honourable monument of the sagacity of that school of criticism; and that, if they were to be submitted to the judgment of that more just and correct criticism which has arisen only since the revival of learning, the result

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CHAP. would be, a very extensive justification of
XI.  empleaded passages, and their restoration to the rights of legitimacy.

Heyne, has afforded a very instructive and warning example of the mischiefs of this excisory system of correction; in his denunciation of Jupiter's disclosure of his plans to Juno in the fifteenth book, as an insertion of some ignorant interpolator. Yet, that disclosure is the fulfilment of Jupiter's promise made to Juno in the first book; which the mind looks for, from the time it is aware that a promise has been made, and which is nowhere else to be found in the poem, except in that place. It is likewise the completion of the partial disclosure, which Jupiter makes to Juno in the eighth book; and which Heyne there extols, on account of "*its relation to the economy of the poem.*" It will be important to observe, with some followed attention, the nature of Heyne's criticism on this notable place.

The Alexandrian grammatists thought fit, in their sapience, to reject the *twenty-two* lines,

from v. 56 to v. 77, inclusive; annexing their reasons for that violent exercise of their assumed authority. Heyne reviewed those several reasons, in their order; and, at length, found, “*pleraque esse levissima*¹ — that most of “*them are exceedingly trifling.*” He selected only two amongst them which he pronounced to be “*gravissima*² — of great weight;” yet even

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¹ Hom. T. vii. p. 18.

² Ib. p. 16, 17. These “*gravissima*,” are, a supposed uncertainty in the sense of *παλιωξιν* in v. 69; and the neuter gender of *Ιλιον* in v. 71, contrary to Homer’s use of that name in all other passages. With respect to the first; the obvious sense which Clarke assigns to the word, and which is afterwards fully confirmed by v. 601, 2, will suggest itself to more than half the readers of the Iliad, on the first perusal. With respect to the neuter gender of *Ιλιον*; Heyne has collected all the different “*medelæ*,” proposed for correcting that anomaly, (p. 21.) He suggests, with Bentley, whether it might not be read, *Ιλιον αιπυν*, instead of *αιπυ*, “*ut sit, ὁ και ἡ “ αιπυς;*” but I believe it will be found, that Homer never applies to the feminine gender, the masculine terminations of adjectives in *υς*. To those suggestions, therefore, we may further add this simple and proximate one; that *αιπυ*, may be no other than an alteration of *ἥπου*, i. e. *οντως δη* — *omnino*

CHAP. these he did not regard as offering insuperable
 XI. difficulties; and, indeed, if duly attended to,
 they will both fall into his class of "*levissima*."

Thus, then, the lines present nothing to the philological critic, that can authorise their condemnation as spurious. And yet, he comes to this decision; that the *seven* lines, from v. 56 to v. 62 inclusive, are *genuine*, but that the remaining *fifteen* lines, are *interpolated*. But, if the diction of the lines contains nothing to warrant condemnation, upon what ground is it, that the German arbitrator would vindicate seven lines from the censure of the Alexandrians, and con-

quidem; employed as emphatic, and confirmative of the declaration (Comp. Il. i. 77, and xvi. 830, and Schol. ad Il. iii. 43, and xxi. 583, Ed. Oxon.); and thus, the gender of *Ιλιον* will remain undisturbed:

ΕΙΣΟΧ' Ἀχαιοί

Ιλιον ηπου ἔλοισεν, Αθηναίης δια βουλας.

If this emendation appear consistent; we can perceive, that the introducer of *αιπυ*, may have been led to the alteration by observing, at v. 558, *Ιλιον αιπεινην ἔλεειν*. But, though it was suitable to *Hector* to apply such an epithet to Troy, it would have been unsuitable to *Jupiter*, who never applies it.

firm their censure upon all the remainder? CHAP.

XI.

This he does not expressly tell us; but he signifies, that he decides thus by a certain *critical tact* or *feeling*; and he expects the concurrence of his reader with his decision:—

“ si comparaveris, *facile* eundem mecum *sentum* habebis.”

But, the review and examination which we have already taken, of Heyne's opinions respecting the primary argument, and of the error of those opinions, will reveal to us the principle which governed his decision in this case; and will, at the same time, show us, that the principle is the offspring of the error, and that it, therefore, inherits its nature. As this is a question which regards, not the *letter*, but the *matter* of the passage, I shall produce it in the version of Pope, brought into closer concord with the original.

When, in the progress of defeat and disaster, the Greeks had been repulsed to their ships; and when Juno, who zealously espoused their cause, and was afflicted at their calamities, had testified a submission to the will of

CHAP. Jupiter; the god, pleased by her unexpected
XI. courtesy, thus addresses her:

Think'st thou with me, fair empress of the skies?¹

(Th' immortal father with a smile replies:)

Then soon the haughty Neptune must submit,

Nor dare to act but as we deem it fit.

If truth inspires thy tongue, convey our will

To yon bright synod on th' Olympian hill.

Our high resolves let various Iris know,

And call the god that bears the silver bow.

Let her descend, and from the embattled plain

Remand the sea-god to his watery reign;

While Phœbus hastens Hector to prepare

To rise afresh, and once more wake the war.

Chas'd then by him ev'n to Achilles' fleet,

Shall Greece fall prostrate at the hero's feet;

He, not unyielding, to the hostile plain

Shall urge Patroclus, but shall urge in vain.

What youths he slaughters under Ilion's walls!

(Ev'n my lov'd son, divine Sarpedon, falls!)

Vanquish'd at length by Hector's spear he lies.

Then, nor till then, shall great Achilles rise;

And lo! that instant godlike Hector dies!

From that great hour the war's whole fortune turns,

Pallas assists, and lofty Ilion burns!

¹ Pope, Il. xv. 53.

For know; that I no more relax my rage,
 No heavenly powers in aid of Greece engage,
 Till to its amplest measure I fulfil
 The fierce desire of stern Achilles' will;
 Till I fulfil the promise of a god
 To Thetis pledg'd with the almighty nod,
 Due honour for Achilles to prepare,
 What time she clasp'd my knees in suppliant pray'r.

The Alexandrians would expunge the whole of this speech from the line beginning, “*Let her descend —*.” Heyne would retain that and the three following lines; but all the remainder of the speech, from the line beginning, “*Chas'd then by him —*” he would reject from the Iliad. Now, the whole ground of this violation, and the only principle which governs his critical tact, is the absence of *any reason* apparent to his discernment, *why* Jupiter should enter into the details which are here ascribed to him. But, the only cause for the absence of that reason to his discernment, is his not discerning the connexion, between the communication of those details and *a promise* to that effect previously made to Juno. — Yet, the promise is made in very distinct terms. Jupiter

CHAP. assures Juno, that she shall know his secret
 XI.

design, *before every other deity*. Now, Thetis is also to know it during the poem, as is likewise the auditor or reader; but, Thetis is only to know it *from the event*; ¹ Juno, therefore, is to know it *before the event*. When Jupiter says, *ὄν (μυθόν) ἐπιεικὲς ἀκούμεν*, *what is fit to hear*, we are to supply, *θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους*, *for gods and men*; and not *σε*, *for thee*, according to the unauthorised and unskilful limitation of the scholiast: ² Fitness, depends on time and season, as much as upon any other circumstance. The declaration of Jupiter therefore imports: “ *I cannot tell thee now; but, when it is fit and proper, thou shalt be the first of all to be informed;*” and the line of Pope, instead of,

What suits *Thy* knowledge, Thou *the first* shalt know;
 should stand,

What *may be known*, Thyself *the first* shalt know. ³

This promise, Heyne entirely overlooked; and he who is not aware of the existence of

¹ See p. 107.

² P. 105.

³ P. 106.

a cause, certainly cannot assign the reason of its effect. The *promise*, however, perfectly accounts for the *communication*; and not only accounts for it, but renders its introduction indispensably necessary, as its proper fulfilment.

But, the promise does not merely justify the communication; it is a principal contrivance of *art* in the poem, and is designed for the especial purpose of *producing the communication*. It is introduced, in order to illuminate the *prospect* of the auditor, and to carry it *forward* to the main action and *end* of the poem; which it does as effectually, as the narrative of Ulysses in the *Odyssey* illustrates and clears the *retrospect*. It is thus that Homer, “*ex fumo dare lucem cogitat — contrives* “*to bring light out of smoke;*” as Horace speaks. It is by means of that promise alone, and its successive fulfilments, that we are *truly* able “*ad eventum festinare — to speed forward with the poet to the term of his poem.*” Without the promise and its fulfilment, without the expectation it raises and the foresight it imparts, the scheme of the *Iliad* is altogether unintelligible and inexplicable; and accord-

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ingly, it has been accounted such, merely because those particulars have not been noticed. Hence alone it is, that Heyne never closed the Iliad, “quin de carminis summa
“et fortuna multa animo volveret;” hence only it is, that, as Wolfe states, “in Iliade non-
“dum deposita sunt certamina virorum doc-
“torum de rerum capite et argumento pri-
“mario.” But, let us only be careful to discern *the promise*, which these learned critics have overlooked; though made in terms perspicuous and unequivocal; and the reason, nay the indispensable necessity, of the whole of the passage which Heyne and the Alexandrians would reject, is obvious and manifest. That oversight, however, ought not to surprise us as much as, at the first view, it appears entitled to do; for it is the remark of an acute and experienced examiner, whose mind was much engaged with the speculations of erudite persons; (and which I have had reason to appeal to in another place;)¹ “*que les plus*
“*sçavans personnages n’ont pas toujours dans*

¹ Illustr. of Virgil’s Fourth Ecl. p. 48.

“ *l'esprit ce qui devoit s'y présenter le plus* CHAP.
 “ *naturellement, lorsqu'ils traitent une chose.*”¹ XI.

Had Heyne rejected the *first* disclosure of Jupiter's designs as spurious, his rejection of the *second* would have been less unreasonable; but, in admitting the *first*, he admits the necessity of the *second*, in order to its completion. The first, conducts the expectation to the *middle* — το μέσον, of the poem; the second, leads it on from thence to the *end* — το τέλος. The merit of the *economy* of the poem, which Heyne recognises in the *first*, would therefore have been essentially defective, without the succession of the *second*.

Let us now take a view of this speech of Jupiter, relatively to its occasion; first, rejecting the lines, and afterwards admitting them; and let us observe, in which state the speech evinces the greater relation to that occasion, and to the context. In the first case; what will this speech say, which is manifestly uttered with a sentiment of con-

¹ Dict. Bayle. art. *Virgile*. not. E.

CHAP. sideration and courtesy towards Juno ? It sends

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her on an errand, to fetch Iris and Apollo. And with what view ? solely that they should augment those distresses of the Greeks, which occasioned distress to herself. Like Belerophon, she is made to bear the mandate of her own mortification and affliction. But, take in the rejected lines, and all becomes natural, rational, and intelligible. Her pain and mortification are corrected and relieved by an assurance, that those measures, apparently so severe, are ultimately designed to bring events to the very issue for which she herself is solicitous ; and which cannot be effected in any other way. Thus, the speech proceeds, and concludes, consistently with the sentiment with which it had commenced ; which, in the other case, it does not. The last lines, advert emphatically to the particular dispensation which Jupiter is constrained to employ ; and which was called forth, by the disordered disposition of Achilles. He declares, with vehemence, his determination, that Achilles shall have his desire of slaughter indulged

to repletion; which he awfully and judiciously accomplishes, by causing it to involve the slaughter of Patroclus. CHAP. XI.

The whole of the speech, as it stands, is likewise necessary, in order to explain the conversation which immediately follows between Themis and Juno; for, the only assignable cause of the terror which the former saw depicted in the countenance of the latter — *ατυζομένη δε εοικας* — is *the vehemence* with which Jupiter had just pronounced his declaration, in the rejected lines. And the alarming and calamitous measures — *κακα εργα* — which Jupiter was meditating, and of which Juno gives obscure notice to Themis, are only revealed to her in those same lines. Yet Heyne, upon no better ground than a defective apprehension, of the primary argument, and of the relation of this passage to that argument, would exenterate the poem of this essential and vital organ of its system; without even a momentary sentiment, of remorse or hesitation.

With a similar apathy, he would concur

CHAP. with the Alexandrians who reject the five
 XI. lines of the same book, from v. 610 to 614,
 inclusive; “*non gravibus de causis — for no*
 “*very weighty reasons,*” as Ernesti well ob-
 serves. Not indeed for the reasons assigned
 by the Alexandrians; for he is obliged to
 agree with Ernesti, in thinking them trifling;
 but, for a peculiar reason of his own, namely;
 “*copia sententiarum inanis, qua oneratur*
 “*oratio non ornatur, imprimis in junctura tam*
 “*molesta, fastidium facit — because the idle*
 “*superfluity of words, by which the passage*
 “*is not adorned but encumbered, especially*
 “*in so difficult a conjuncture, creates a dis-*
 “*gust;*” and because, “*l. 611, especially — est*
 “*et obscura et jejuna—is both obscure and barren.*”
 That this line is neither obscure nor barren,
 may be seen by its intimate relation to the
 primary argument, already shown.¹ And, a
 mere *fastidiousness*, with respect to the other
 lines, supplies no reason whatever, why they
 should be conceded to him; since they have

¹ P. 74.

moved no such sentiment in others, equal to himself in judgment and in taste, if not in labour of learning; which is quite a distinct thing. His "*fastidium facit*," receives a complete answer; and the only one to which it can lay pretension; from the trite maxim, "*de gustibus non est disputandum*." CHAP. XI.

Many of the passages which Heyne would reject, upon the ground of their showing no relation to the primary argument, which he supposed to be either *the anger of Achilles* or *the prayer of Thetis*, certainly show no relation to either of those arguments; but then, they manifest a direct relation to the true primary argument, which we have contemplated. Others of those passages, show no relation to any of these; but then, they deserve no censure upon that account; because, they are not introduced with a view to the principal argument, but to the *μεγαλοπρεπεια* and *ογκος* — the *magnificence* and *enlargement* of the poem. And yet, the learned commentator imagined, that we needed nothing more for consenting to prune away the Iliad, than to be

CHAP. XI. told every now and then; "*locus cum summa*
 " "*argumenti parum aptus et nexus, ita ut eum,*
 " "*si abesset, nemo facile desideret. — Possunt se-*
 " "*rioris rhapsodi videri, ut tot alia; sunt enim*
 " "*a summa narrationis aliena. — Omnia hæc*
 " "*otiosa sunt, et languidam elumbemque ora-*
 " "*tionem faciunt.*" These, and all similar ob-

servations, are at the most only testimonies of private and individual taste; but they will not authorize the expulsion of one single iota. Horace criticised with much better judgment, when he said;

aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.

And worthy Homer sometimes seems to doze:

which observation will receive its best comment from Quintilian. "A reader is not to
 " take up the works of great authors with
 " a persuasion, that every thing they say is
 " perfect. For, sometimes they stumble under
 " the weight of the burthen which they have
 " undertaken; or, sometimes they indulge the
 " indolence of their own genius. Nor can they
 " always keep the mind at the same stretch,

“ but sometimes yield to fatigue ; thus, De- CHAP.
 “ mosthenes appeared to Cicero, and even Ho- XI.
 “ mer himself to Horace, sometimes ‘ *to doze.*’
 “ For, though they were men of *the first order*,
 “ yet still they were *but men.*”¹ These wary
 critics did not distribute the more vigorous
 parts of the poem to Homer, and the less
 vigorous to some ideal interpolator, always at
 hand to receive them ; yet it was as obvious,
 and as easy, for them to suppose interpola-
 tion, as it was for Wolfe and for Heyne. But,
 the former temperately untied the knot, which
 the latter intemperately cut through.

It is impossible not to regret, that Mr.
 Knight ; whose judgment was proof against the
 fallacies of the German critics ; should neverthe-
 less have adventured, not to pronounce which

¹ Neque id statim legenti persuasum sit, omnia, quæ
 magni auctores dixerint, utique esse perfecta. Nam et
 labuntur aliquando, et oneri cedunt, et indulgent ingeniorum
 suorum voluptati: nec semper intendunt animum, et non-
 nunquam fatigantur, cum Ciceroni *dormitare* interdum Demo-
 sthenes, Horatio vero etiam Homerus ipse videatur. *Summi*
 enim sunt, *homines* tamen. Inst. L. x. c. 1.

CHAP. XI. passages he deemed spurious, but actually to reject from the text of his recent edition, all those which he judged to be so : thus, carrying into positive execution the sentence, which Heyne only pronounced from the critical bench. Had he been contented to mark, *censoria virgula*, the lines which he suspected, his book would have been perfect; inasmuch as it would have comprised all the epic poetry of Homer. Whereas, in *expunging* the passages which awakened his personal suspicion, it is not possible, but that out of so many rejected lines he must, on the principle of *chances* alone, have discarded some which are sincere and genuine; the apprehension of which, must keep alive a perpetual and uneasy sense of doubt and mistrust in his critical reader, who cannot consent to yield his judgment altogether, to the rule of arbitrary dictation.

But, besides this general ground of mistrust, there is a particular reason why we cannot view, without the greatest jealousy and dissatisfaction, the havoc thus made with the text of Homer; and I trust, that the cause of

Homer, and of truth, will excuse me to that distinguished veteran scholar, if I adduce that reason, in proof, that the eagerness of minute criticism often urges it to outstep the limits of its jurisdiction. CHAP.
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Aristotle, in the beginning of his *Poetics*, formally states; “that Homer afforded the “first model of comedy, in his poem entitled “*Margites*; and that his *Margites* bore the “same relation to comedy, that his *Iliad* and “*Odyssey* bear to tragedy.”¹ This position is advanced, without any qualification of reserve or doubt whatever; and under a thorough conviction, that Homer was the author of all those three poems. Accordingly, both in his *Nicomachean*,² and *Eudemian*³ *Ethics*, he quotes from *the Margites of Homer*, with the same confidence with which he elsewhere quotes from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Plato likewise makes Socrates quote from the *Margites*, as from an undoubted poem of Homer. Dio

¹ C. 4.² L. vi. 7.³ L. v. 7.

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accounted the *Margites* to be the first production of Homer, composed in his youth.¹ Aristophanes, likewise quotes from the same poem; and delivers his quotation, as the words of Homer.² Callimachus, who regarded it as Homer's, viewed it with admiration: ὅπερ ποίημα Καλλιμαχος θαυμάζειν εοικεν.³ Archilochus, Cratinus, with others of the more ancient Greeks, regarded the *Margites* as one of the works of Homer.

Of this celebrated poem, however, there remain only *three* verses, expressly quoted by the Greek writers. Three other lines, which are found in the scholiast on the *Orestes* of Euripides, have been referred by Winstanley, with great probability, to the same poem.⁴ Of the *three* verses, expressly cited from the *Margites*, one and a half is quoted by Aristotle, of which the remaining half is supplied by Cle-

¹ Diss. 53.² Aves. l. 914, 915, et Scholium.³ Harpocration. in v. *Μαργιτης*. ⁴ Arist. Poet. Winst. not. ult.

mens of Alexandria; and one, by the scholiast CHAP.
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on the *Aves* of Aristophanes. But, besides these *three verses*, Plato, in his *second Alcibiades*, has quoted *the substance* of another verse, which he has woven into *the prose* of his dialogue; reducing it, at the same time, into the *Attic dialect*, in which he wrote. The

passage is this : ὥστε ζυμβαίνειν μοι δοκεῖ καὶ ἐνταυθα τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ὃ λέγει κατηγορῶν που τίνος, ὥς ἀρα πολλὰ μὲν ἠπιστάτο ἐργα, κακῶς δὲ (φησὶν) ἠπιστάτο πάντα. And presently after: Ὅμηρον, τὸν σοφωτά-

τον τε καὶ θειοτάτον ποιητὴν — ἐκεῖνος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὃ λέγων, τὸν Μαργίτην πολλὰ μὲν ἐπιστάσθαι, κακῶς δὲ, φησὶ, πάντα ἐπιστάσθαι. A modern scholar, in

the amusement of leading back this line from prose to poetry, inconsiderately retained the dialect of Plato, and rendered it thus:

πολλ' ἠπιστάτο ἐργα, κακῶς δ' ἠπιστάτο πάντα.¹

Yet, upon this single line, the learned philologist has adventured this merciless criticism:

¹ Twining's *Arist. P.* p. 193.

CHAP. “ With confidence we may pronounce *the*
 XI. *Margites to have been a forgery*, though there
 “ are only four lines of it extant, and three
 “ of those are quoted as authentic, by Plato
 “ and Aristotle: *but in these we have a compound*
 “ *verb with the augment upon the preposition,*
 “ (*ηπιστατο*) *which Homer’s grammar did not*
 “ *admit.*”¹

But, the line upon which this learned scholar has unwarily fixed, as supplying evidence on which he can “ *with confidence* pronounce the “ *Margites to have been a forgery,*” notwithstanding the contrary persuasion of Plato, Zeno, Aristotle, &c. *was not quoted by Plato,* and proves to be only *a modern line*, incautiously constructed; for it is certain, that it would not have stood in that form in the dialect of Homer. It so happens, however, that Homer has preserved for us in his Iliad, both an evidence that the line in question was his own, and also a pattern by which to restore

¹ Analytical Essay on the Greek alphabet. P. 30.

to him. In Il. xxiii. 705, Achilles proposes, CHAP.
as one of the prizes of the funeral games of ^{XI.}
Patroclus, a female slave, whom Homer thus
describes :

πολλα δ' ἐπιστατο εργα, τιον δε εἰ τεσσαραβοιον.

Here is his own phrase, and his own form.
And we, therefore, now perceive; that the
line alluded to, and atticized by Plato, would
have stood thus in the original poem :

πολλα δ' ἐπιστατο εργα, κακως δε γ' ἐπιστατο παντα.

The whole ground, therefore, vanishes, on which
the Margites was to have been proved *a forgery*;
and the criticism now remains only as a caution
to learned posterity, of the dangers to which
ancient literature is exposed, from the violent
action of learning itself. The criticism has
power, only over *the modern line*; but it has
none whatever that can enable it to reach or
affect the poem of the Margites, which lies
beyond its jurisdiction. Now, since upon such
a ground of evidence as this, the learned gram-

CHAP. XI. *marian* would *confidently pronounce* an entire poem of Homer to be a *forgery*; how is it possible not to entertain a prudential suspicion, that many of the numerous passages which he has discharged from the text of Homer, may have been condemned by as precipitate and insufficient a judgment, as this by which he condemned the entire *Margites*?

It is true, that, in later ages, the *Margites* is mentioned with doubt, by some writers, as a production of Homer; as, by Clemens of Alexandria, in the second century, Suidas in the tenth, and Eustathius in the twelfth. But, they adduce no testimony in support of their doubt; and it is not difficult to assign a probable reason for its entertainment. The veneration in which Homer had stood for many ages, as the author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and the grave and lofty matter of those two admired poems, generated a fastidious disinclination to believe; that a work of so light, and comparatively of so low a character as the *Margites*, could ever have occupied his sublime me-

CHAP. XI.
 ditation. It was, as if the poet of *Paradise Lost* had been the author also of *Hudibras*; which might have been distasteful to some minds. It is, indeed, wonderful, that the same genius should have been equally successful in such opposite kinds of poetry, and that it should have been the first parent, equally of tragedy and of comedy; but yet, we cannot reasonably and critically question the fact, if we weigh evidence scrupulously in a moral scale. And certainly, the scenes of Thersites in the *Iliad*, and of Irus in the *Odyssey*, and the whimsical conceit, of Ulysses under the denomination of οὐτις, *nobody*, in the latter poem, are incontestible evidences; that the mind of Homer had a vein well disposed to *the ludicrous*—το γελοῖον, as well as to *the serious*—τα σπουδαία, conformably to the statement of Aristotle. And let us not forget, that Tzetzes, in the twelfth century, twice refers to the *Margites*, as to a certain production of Homer.¹

¹ Chil. iv. 868, and vi. H. 61.

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It would be a desperate resource, to question facts on such sceptical ground, as that on which Heyne would disown Homer for the author of the Iliad. “*How can it be thought probable,*” he asks,—“*quomodo probabile haberi potest,*” that “*one man* should have appeared on a sudden; “whose mind could conceive an epic poem, “designed and contrived with admirable genius and skill; subjected to the subtilty of “rule, though of an argument vast and comprehensive; in which every thing is most “elaborate, the elegance of the diction, the “sweetness of the verse, the simplicity of “the sentiments, precepts, and discourse; in “a word, a poem, in which the nicest art “is conjoined with a native grace, which “could only have existed prior to art?”¹ To this, we can only say; that, however improbable, *à priori*, such a phenomenon must seem, it is nevertheless a fact of real occurrence, in the issues of things. To deny it,

¹ Hom. T. viii. p. 803.

would be to plunge into difficulties, far greater CHAP.
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than that which we would seek to avoid: like 
those philosophists, who, to avoid the admis-
sion of a first cause, involve themselves in con-
tradictions from which they never can escape.

That the original dialect of the Iliad and
Odyssey should have been variously altered
in different and early ages, cannot surprise us
when we reflect; that we ourselves have not
chosen to preserve and perpetuate the original
orthographies of Spenser and Shakespeare. The
same taste, or the same fastidiousness, which
occasioned an alteration in the orthographies
of the latter, would have prompted a similar
alteration in the dialect of the former. Such
changes would induce changes in the phraseo-
logy also, (yet without necessarily inducing
interpolation;) the experience of which led
Dr. Johnson to remark: “ If phraseology is
“ to be changed as words grow uncouth by
“ disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history
“ of every language will be lost; we shall
“ no longer have the words of any author;
“ and as these alterations will be often un-

CHAP. “ skilfully made, we shall in time have very
XI. “ little of his meaning.”¹ If this reasoning
is applicable to any alterations which may
have taken place between the age of Spenser
and Shakespeare, and our own age; how great
must be its force when applied to those altera-
tions, which, without supposing interpolation,
may have been produced in the dialect and
phraseology of Homer, during the ages which
have intervened between our time and his? And
yet, a corrective criticism, which would under-
take to rectify all these, must proceed with
a sobriety, reserve, and circumspection, so per-
fect and unimpeachable, that our experience
does not encourage us to hope for it very
sanguinely, from the zeal and ardor of elabo-
rate erudition. Since the smallest licentious-
ness of system, or abuse of hypothesis, must
tend, and can only tend, to substitute one
mode of vitiation for another.

There remains for us, however, the satis-

¹ Note to Hamlet. A. iv. S. 5. See also, Todd's pref. to
Spenser, p. 2, 3.

faction resulting from the internal evidence CHAP.
of the general integrity of the poem ; and which XI.
consists, in the manifest, unimpaired *unity* of
its primary argument, notwithstanding the risks
and chances through which it has floated
down the stream of ages. Although that ar-
gument has not been recognised, yet nothing
has befallen it, to derange its symmetry, or
to mutilate its parts ; which could not have
been the case, had its substance been as
much tampered with, as some have gra-
tuitously or fancifully supposed. That pe-
culiar and exclusive character of the poems
of Homer ; that, although they treat more
copiously than any other poem of *human vicis-*
situdes and calamities, yet they do not contain
within them the mention of *τυχη* — *chance* or
fortune, or any synonymous term to convey
those ideas ; is alone a proof, both that the
entire poem proceeded from the same mind,
and that it has not been varied from its original
character. Had the Iliad been only a tissue
of songs, composed by different poets ; we

CHAP. must have heard, in the effusions of some of
 XI. these, of *τυχη*, *chance*. If, on the other hand,
 it had been as freely interlarded with later
 insertions as some have imagined; it is scarcely
 possible that, amid *such subjects*, mention of
 an agency so universally and colloquially
 common in the ages following Homer, should
 not in some of those ages have made its way,
 in some instance or other, either through de-
 fect of judgment or inadvertency, into the
 body of the text.

I shall now conclude this treatise. If, in
 the progress of it, I shall have appeared to
 betray a peculiar earnestness in the support
 of my argument, I beg the reader to re-
 member, that he has not found it stirred by
 any other motive, than an anxious desire to
 vindicate the fame of Homer and of Aristotle
 against the unwarranted assailments of modern
 speculatists; whose pretensions, asserted with
 a menacing array of gigantic learning, tend
 directly to supplant the just rights and pre-
 rogatives of both: a consideration, which I

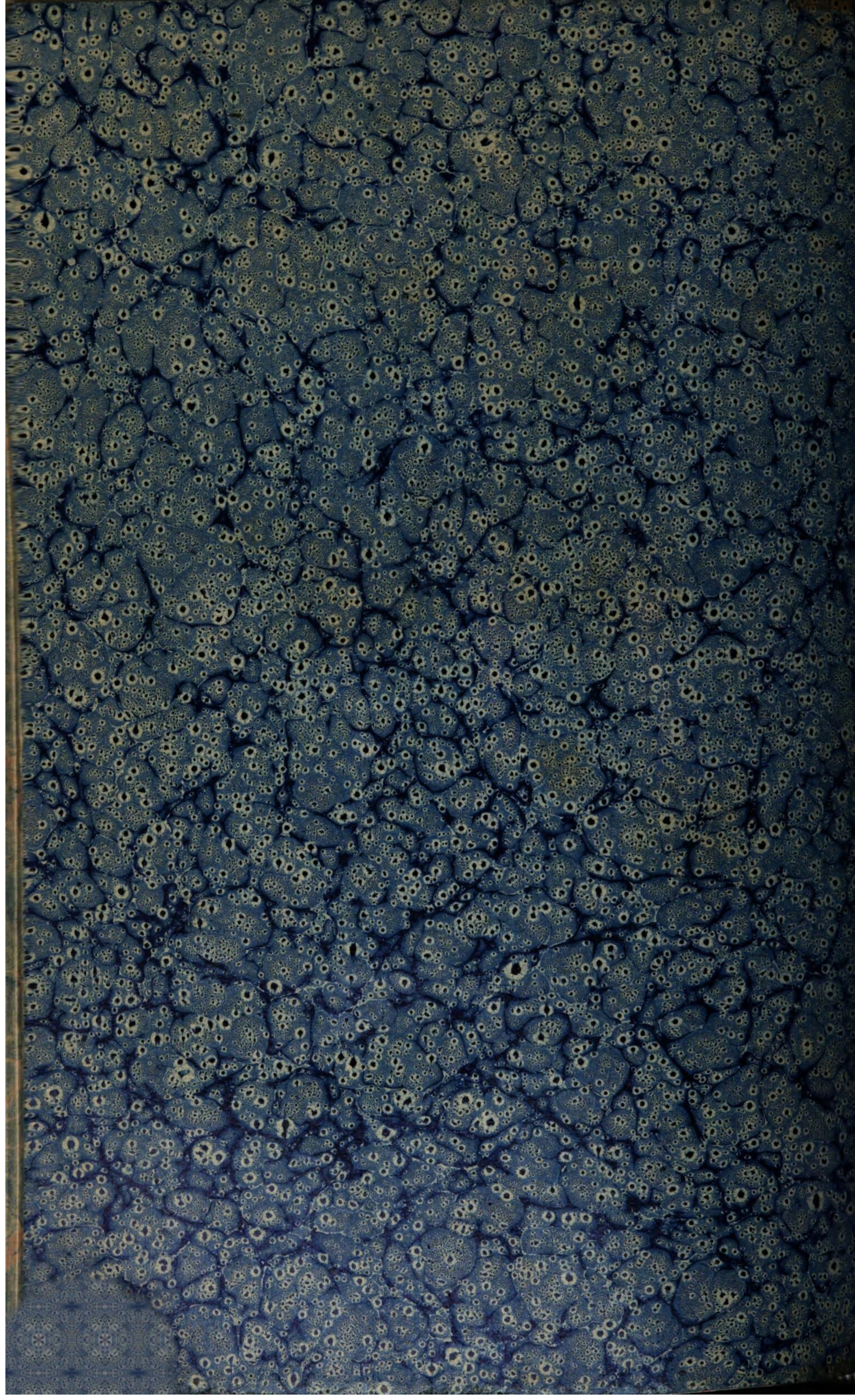
hope will secure me from any imputation of CHAP. a presumption, of which I feel no conscious- XI. ness within. If I have expressed myself with an unreserved freedom, concerning the peculiar opinions of some great names; I request him to recollect, that it has been the inevitable consequence of attempting an active defence of other names, which have been justly pronounced great and illustrious, by the united suffrages of very many ages. If I have produced, as *The Primary Argument of the Iliad*, that which has not been produced as such before; I desire him to understand, that I offer it, not as the fruit of profounder research or penetration, but only of a more ordinary and superficial observation; not as seeing farther or deeper than others, but only as noticing close at hand, that for which others had looked too far. “For,” (as I have elsewhere had cause to observe,) “how often
“do we see the prone eye of a child discover that, which remains lost in the area of
“a grown person’s search?” If he will can-

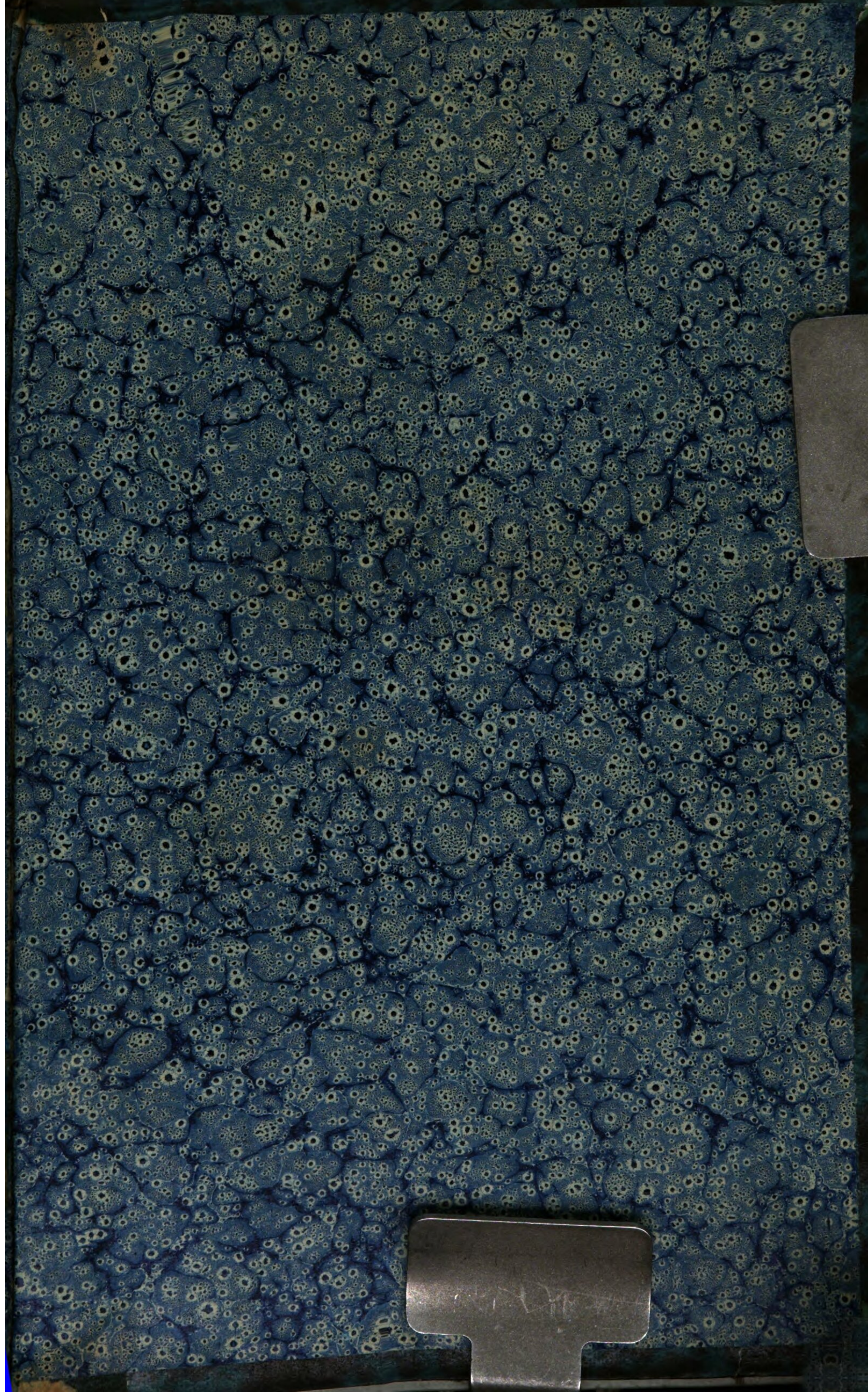
CHAP. XI. didly consider these things, he must plainly perceive; that my object in this discussion has not been to introduce and impose a *neoterism* upon the world, if I may so express myself, but to restore and reinstate an *archaism*; and that I have argued, not for my learned contemporaries, “*parere minori*,” but solely, for OURSELVES! “*JUNIORES, AUDIRE.*”

THE END.

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